

VOLUME 21

NUMBER 8/9

PRICE 8p

SEP 25 1980

Christian Order



Summary of Contents for August/September, 1980

- | | |
|--|---|
| THE POPE TO HIS PRIESTS : 1 | <i>Pope John Paul II</i> |
| DEATH COMES TO THE ARCHBISHOP | <i>The Editor</i> |
| THE CHURCH, POLITICAL ORGANIZATION
AND VIOLENCE : 1 | <i>Archbishop Romero and Bishop Damas</i> |
| HOW MANY ARE THERE ? | <i>Burke Cosgrove</i> |
| LOOKING TO THE ETERNAL | <i>Henry Edwards</i> |
| UEBLA AND AFTER | <i>Paul Crane, S.J.</i> |

MANY THANKS

to those who have renewed their subscriptions so kindly and with such generosity during these past months. I am extremely grateful to you all.

Paul Crane, S.J.

Contents

Page

386 WORDS AND DEEDS *The Editor*

390 THE POPE TO HIS PRIESTS: 1
Pope John Paul II

401 GOD'S PRIEST *Fr. Joseph Brown*

404 DEATH COMES TO THE
ARCHBISHOP *The Editor*

416 THE CHRISTIAN MIND: 2
Henry Edwards

423 A LAST INTERVIEW
The Late Archbishop Romero

426 HOW MANY ARE THERE?
Burke Cosgrove

430 THE CHURCH, POLITICAL
ORGANIZATION AND
VIOLENCE: 1
*Archbishop Oscar Romero and
Bishop Arturo Damas*

445 BOOK REVIEW *Paul Crane, S.J.*

If You Change Your Address :

Please let us know two or three weeks ahead if possible and please send us both new and old addresses. Thank you.

Christian Order is a magazine devoted to Catholic Social Teaching and incisive comment on current affairs in Church and State; at home and abroad; in the political, social and industrial fields. It is published ten times a year.

It is published by Father Paul Crane, S.J., from 65, Belgrave Rd., London, S.W.1. This is the sole postal address to which all communications concerning *Christian Order* should be sent.

Christian Order is obtainable only by subscription and from this address. In the case of those desiring more than one copy, these are obtainable at the subscription rate and should be paid for in advance.

The annual subscription to *Christian Order* is £1 in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland; \$3.00 in the United States, Canada and Australia; elsewhere, according to the approximate sterling rate of exchange, in the currency of the country concerned or any convenient currency.

Air-mail rates as follows :

U.S.A., Canada
India, etc.—£4.00, U.S. \$8.00
Australia—£4.50, A. \$8.00
N. Zealand—£4.50, N.Z. \$8.00

Christian Order

EDITED BY

Paul Crane SJ

VOLUME 21 AUGUST/SEPTEMBER NUMBER 8/9

Words and Deeds

THE EDITOR

AT the end of his Apostolic Letter, *On the Mystery and Worship of the Eucharist*, which was addressed to the Bishops of the Church and dated February 4th of this year, Pope John Paul showed that deep sensitivity for the feelings of the Faithful that we have come to expect of him. He wrote:

"As I bring these considerations to an end, I would like to ask forgiveness—in my own name and in the name of all of you, venerable and dear Brothers in the Episcopate—for everything which, for whatever reason, through whatever human weakness, impatience or negligence, and also through the at times partial, one-sided and erroneous application of the directives of the Second Vatican Council, may have caused scandal and disturbance concerning the interpretation of the doctrine and the veneration due to this great Sacrament. And I pray the Lord Jesus that in the future we may avoid in our manner of dealing with this sacred mystery anything which could weaken or disorient in any way the sense of reverence and love that exists in our faithful people".

These words will have brought great comfort to the many who have suffered so much during past years at the hands of the so-called liturgical reformers. These have used the

general reform of the liturgy inaugurated by the Second Vatican Council as an occasion for the exercise of private initiatives, which have served only to debase and degrade it and which they had no business to introduce in the first place. These the Holy Father censured in his letter. The same applies to those clerics who have refused to allow to the Faithful the exercise of the legitimate option that is theirs—for example, in this country—in the matter of receiving Holy Communion on the tongue or in the hand. There have been far too many cases of those who favoured the former method being pressurised into the latter. Thus the Holy Eucharist, which should be a bond of unity, has been turned all too frequently in the recent past, as the Pope notes in his Letter, into an occasion of discord and division. This is tragedy.

Worse still in a way, despite the Holy Father's Apostolic Letter, aberrations that intrude on the Eucharistic Sacrifice continue in the Church. Thus his words of comfort have been dimmed for many by what appears to them as his powerlessness to give them practical effect at diocesan and parochial level within the Church. The result in a fair number of cases has been increased bitterness and frustration—understandably so. The same applies to the insertion in the fields of religious teaching and practice, doctrinal and religious belief, of offensive and wrong-headed initiatives, which are purely personal and without the sanction of ecclesiastical authority. These initiatives continue, despite the fact that the Holy Father's wishes in these matters have been made extremely clear in his writings and public exhortations, particularly those made in the course of his journeys to different countries and continents throughout the world.

The aberrations continue. One is entitled to wonder what the Bishops are doing. An impression gained is that the response of the Irish and American Hierarchies to the call made by Pope John Paul for a profound renewal of doctrinal and moral values, has been almost wholly negative, virtually negligible. Once the euphoria generated by the papal visits to both countries was over, things drifted back to "normal". There would appear to have been virtually no

effective follow-up; no sign of it in either country. And, frankly, does anyone really believe that the Dutch Bishops will be second to none in the zealous upholding of their Statement of forty-six clauses, drawn up at the end of their Synod held in Rome in January of this year, and in which they pledged their faithfulness to the Church? I am not being cynical. Here I am stating my own belief which is shared by many others as well. What it comes to is this. The Holy Father is without support where he most needs it. He would appear to have very few effective and courageous backers amongst the Bishops of the world. For the great bulk of them, it would seem, lip-service is rendered and that is all. From them, smiles and gracious words and avuncular indulgence, especially when the Pope is on their native soil. Once he has gone, the lethargy returns. There is no firmness. Words in a stream, and rather soft words at that. No deeds.

The situation is brutally simple. The Holy Father is without *effective* authority because the authority which is his by divine right is scouted by the Bishops, who ought to be the very first to uphold it. He is greeted effusively by them. He is listened to; but only rarely would his words appear to be taken seriously by any of them. Were they so taken, episcopal deeds would follow his words. Given the apparent absence of deeds in support of Pope John Paul's injunctions with regard to liturgy, catechetics, priestly training, pastoral action and social reform, doctrinal and moral belief, it would be fair to conclude, I think, that the assent of Hierarchies to papal injunctions is, for the most part, notional rather than real; respectful, but without the substance of sequential action; bereft of follow-up. All of which means that the Pope is left to do alone a task which no Pope can do alone. Which means again that without a drastic change of episcopal heart, the Pope will find failure waiting for him at the end of the road along which he is travelling so courageously at the moment, but forced to travel alone.

What the Holy Father is looking for from his Brother Bishops, I feel sure, is not an imposed uniformity, which is useless here or anywhere, for that matter, but *union* with himself in *united* pursuit of the massive task of restoration

that confronts him. To carry it through he *must* have the wholehearted assent and most willing co-operation of the Bishops. Short of that, the task cannot be accomplished. The hierarchial structure of the Church forbids it being left to the laity alone. Thus, a fearful responsibility rests on the Bishops of the world. If they prove incapable of sustaining it, one can only conclude that others will have to be found who can sustain it. With the greatest good-will in the world, with hard feelings towards none and with the good of the Church and the world my sole concern, I can arrive at no other conclusion.

CHRISTIAN AGONY TODAY

A bewildered world
Of men, who, with
Their new theologies
Dare to direct souls
In ways
Before, unknown.
What need of these
Contentions
When You have left
Your Testament
Where we can read
Your words,
Hear Your voice,
And follow Your directions,
And know peace?
Dear Lord, deliver
Your precious Ark
Of the Church and
Its present Peter
From such foolish men
Who, within the gates,
Are your enemies.

—Anon.

Last year, on the occasion of Holy Thursday, 1979, Pope John Paul II wrote the following letter to his priests throughout the world. It touches most positively on aspects of the priesthood that have come into question in recent years and must have been in the minds of many within the Church, priests and lay-folk alike. As an encouragement and help to those who have been confused, understandably enough, by this questioning, we are reproducing this letter in Christian Order in two parts, the first of which appears below, with the second being published in October.

The Pope to His Priests: I

Dear Brother Priests,

AT the beginning of my new ministry in the Church, I feel the deep need to speak to you, to all of you without any exception, Priests both diocesan and Religious, who are my brothers by virtue of the sacrament of Orders. From the very beginning I wish to express my faith in the vocation that unites you to your Bishops, in a special communion of sacrament and ministry, through which the Church, the Mystical Body of Christ, is built up. To all of you therefore, who, by virtue of a special grace and through a singular gift of our Saviour, bear "the burden of the day and heat" (1) in the midst of the many tasks of the priestly and pastoral ministry, I have addressed my thoughts and my heart from the moment when Christ called me to this See, where St. Peter, with his life and his death, had to respond until the end to the question: Do you love me? Do you love me more than these others do? (2).

I think of you all the time, I pray for you, with you *I seek the ways of spiritual union and collaboration*, because by virtue of the sacrament of Orders, which I also received from the hands of my Bishop (the Metropolitan of Krakow, Adam Stephen Cardinal Sapieha, of unforgettable memory), you are my brothers. And so, adapting the words of

St. Augustine, (3) I want to say to you today: "For you I am a Bishop, with you I am a Priest". Today, in fact, there is a special circumstance that impels me to confide to you some thoughts that I enclose in this Letter: it is the nearness of Holy Thursday. It is this, the annual feast of our priesthood, that unites the whole Presbyterium of each diocese about its Bishop in the shared celebration of the Eucharist. It is on this day that all Priests are invited to renew, before their own Bishop and together with him, the promises they made at their priestly Ordination; and this fact enables me, together with all my brothers in the Episcopate, to be joined to you in a special unity, and especially to be in the very heart of the mystery of Jesus Christ, the mystery in which we all share.

The Second Vatican Council, which so explicitly highlighted the collegiality of the Episcopate in the Church, also gave a new form to the life of the priestly communities, joined together by a special bond of brotherhood, and united to the Bishop of the respective local Church. The whole priestly life and ministry serve to deepen and strengthen that bond; and a particular responsibility for the various tasks involved by his life and ministry is taken on by the Priests' Councils, which, in conformity with the thought of the Council and the *Motu Proprio Ecclesiae Sanctae* (4) of Paul VI, should be functioning in every diocese. All this is meant to ensure that each Bishop, in union with his Presbyterium, can serve ever more effectively the great cause of evangelization. Through this service the Church realizes her mission, indeed her very nature. The importance of the unity of the Priests with their own Bishop on this point is confirmed by the words of St. Ignatius of Antioch: "Strive to do all things in the harmony of God, with the Bishop presiding to represent God, the presbyters representing the council of the apostles, and the deacons, so dear to me, entrusted with the service of Jesus Christ". (5)

Love for Christ and the Church Unites Us

It is not my intention to include in this Letter everything that makes up the richness of the priestly life and ministry. In this regard I refer to the whole tradition of the *Magisterium* and of the Church, and in a special way to the doc-

trine of the Second Vatican Council, contained in the Council's various documents, especially in the Constitution *Lumen Gentium* and the Decrees *Presbyterorum Ordinis* and *Ad Gentes*. I also wish to recall the Encyclical of my Predecessor Paul VI, *Sacerdotalis Caelibatus*. Finally, I wish to place great importance upon the Document *De Sacerdotio Ministeriali*, which Paul VI approved as the fruit of the labors of the 1971 Synod of Bishops, because I find in this Document — although the session of the Synod that elaborated it had only a consultative form—a statement of essential importance regarding the specific aspect of the priestly life and ministry in the modern world.

Referring to all these sources, which you are familiar with, I wish in the present Letter *only to mention a number of points* which seem to me to be of extreme importance at this moment in the history of the Church and of the world. These are words that are dictated to me by my love for the Church, which will be able to carry out her mission to the world only if—in spite of all human weakness—she maintains her fidelity to Christ. I know that I am addressing those whom only the love of Christ has enabled, by means of a specific vocation, to give themselves to the service of the Church and, in the Church, to the service of man for the solution of the most important problems, and especially those regarding man's eternal salvation.

Although at the beginning of these considerations I refer to many written sources and official documents, nevertheless I wish to refer especially to that living source which is our shared love for Christ and His Church, a love that springs from the grace of the priestly vocation, the love that is the greatest gift of the Holy Spirit. (6)

"Chosen from Among Men . . . Appointed to Act on Behalf of Men" (7)

The Second Vatican Council deepened the idea of the priesthood and presented it, throughout its teaching, as the expression of the inner forces, those "dynamisms", whereby the mission of the whole People of God in the Church is constituted. Here one should refer especially to the Constitution, *Lumen Gentium*, and reread carefully the relevant paragraphs. The mission of the People of God is carried

out through the sharing in the office and mission of Jesus Christ Himself, which, as we know, has a triple dimension: it is the mission and office of the Prophet, Priest and King. If we analyze carefully the conciliar texts, it is obvious that one should speak of a triple dimension of Christ's service and mission, rather than of three different functions. In fact, these functions are closely linked to one another, explain one another, condition one another and clarify one another. Consequently, it is from this threefold unity that our sharing in Christ's mission and office takes its origin. As Christians, members of the People of God, and subsequently, as priests, sharers in the hierarchical order, we take our origin from the combination of the mission and office of our Teacher, who is Prophet, Priest and King in order to witness to Him in a special way in the Church and before the world.

The priesthood in which we share through the sacrament of Orders, which has been forever "imprinted" on our souls through a special sign from God, that is to say the "character", *remains in explicit relationship with the common priesthood of the faithful*, that is to say the priesthood of all baptized, but at the same time it differs from that priesthood "essentially and not only in degree" 8. In this way, the words of the author of the Letter to the Hebrews about the priest, who has been "chosen from among men . . . appointed to act on behalf of men", (9) take on their full meaning.

At this point, it is better to reread once more the whole of this classical conciliar text, which expresses the basic truths on the theme of our vocation in the Church:

"Christ the Lord, high priest taken from among men (cf. *Heb.* 5:1), made the new people 'a kingdom of priests to God, His Father' (*Rev.* 1:6, cf. 5:9-10). The baptized, by regeneration and the anointing of the Holy Spirit, are consecrated to be a spiritual house and a holy priesthood, that through all the works of Christian men they may offer spiritual sacrifice and proclaim the perfection of Him who has called them out of darkness into His marvellous light (cf. *I Pt.* 2:4-10). Therefore all the disciples of Christ, perserving in prayer and praising God together (cf. *Acts.* 2:42-47), should pre-

sent themselves as a sacrifice, living, holy and pleasing to God (cf. *Rom.* 12:1). They should everywhere on earth bear witness to Christ and give an answer to everyone who asks a reason for the hope of an eternal life which is theirs (cf. *I Pt.* 3:15).

"Though they differ essentially and not only in degree; the common priesthood of the faithful and the ministerial or hierarchical priesthood are none the less ordered one to another; each in its own proper way shares in the one priesthood of Christ. The ministerial priest, by the sacred power that he has, forms and rules the priestly people; in the person of Christ he effects the Eucharistic Sacrifice and offers it to God in the name of all the people. The faithful indeed, by virtue of their royal priesthood, participate in the offering of the Eucharist. They exercise that priesthood, too, by the reception of the sacraments, prayer and thanksgiving, the witness of a holy life, abnegation and active charity". (10)

The Priest as a Gift of Christ for the Community

We must consider down to the smallest detail not only the theoretical meaning but also the existential meaning of the mutual "relation" that exists between the hierarchical priesthood and the common priesthood of the faithful. The fact that they differ not only in degree but also in essence is a fruit of a particular aspect of the richness of the very priesthood of Christ, which is the one center and the one source both of that participation which belongs to all the baptised and of that other participation which is reached through a distinct sacrament, which is precisely the sacrament of Orders. This sacrament, dear Brothers, which is specific for us, which is the fruit of the special grace of vocation and the basis of our identity, by virtue of its very nature and of everything that it produces in our life and activity, serves to make the faithful aware of their common priesthood and to activate it: (11) the sacrament reminds them that they are the People of God and enables them "to offer spiritual sacrifice", (12) through which Christ Himself makes us an everlasting gift to the Father. (13) This takes place, above all, when the priest "by the sacred power that

he has . . . in the person of Christ (*in persona Christi*) effects the Eucharistic Sacrifice and offers it to God in the name of all the people", (14) as we read in the conciliar text quoted above.

Our sacramental priesthood, therefore, is a "hierarchical" and, at the same time, "ministerial" priesthood. It constitutes a special *ministerium*, that is to say "service", in relation to the community of believers. It does not, however, take its origin from that community, as though it were the community that "called" or "delegated". The sacramental priesthood is truly a gift for this community and comes from Christ Himself, from the fullness of His priesthood. This fullness finds its expression in the fact that Christ, while making everyone capable of offering the spiritual sacrifice, calls some and enables them to be ministers of His own sacramental Sacrifice, the Eucharist—in the offering of which all the faithful share—in which are taken up all the spiritual sacrifices of the People of God.

Conscious of this reality, we understand how our priesthood is "hierarchical", that is to say connected with the power of forming and governing the priestly people (15) and *precisely for this reason*, "ministerial". We carry out this office, through which Christ Himself unceasingly "serves" the Father in the work of our salvation. Our whole priestly existence is and must be deeply imbued with this service, if we wish to effect in an adequate way the Eucharistic Sacrifice *in persona Christi*.

The priesthood calls for a particular integrity of life and service, and precisely such integrity is supremely fitting for our priestly identity. In that identity there are expressed, at the same time, the greatness of our dignity and the "availability" proportionate to it: it is a question of the humble readiness to accept the gifts of the Holy Spirit and to transmit to others the fruits of love and peace, to give them that certainty of faith from which derive the profound understanding of the meaning of human existence and the capacity to introduce the moral order into the life of individuals and of the human setting.

Since the priesthood is given to us so that we can unceasingly serve others, after the example of Christ the Lord, the priesthood cannot be renounced because of the difficulties

that we meet and the sacrifices asked of us. Like the apostle, we have left everything to follow Christ; (16) therefore, we must persevere beside Him also through the Cross.

In the Service of the Good Shepherd

As I write, there pass before the eyes of my soul the vast and varied areas of human life, areas into which you are sent, dear Brothers, like laborers into the Lord's vineyard. (17) But for you there holds also the parable of the flock, (18) for, thanks to the priestly character, you share in the *pastoral charism*, which is a sign of a special relationship of *likeness to Christ the Good Shepherd*. You are precisely marked with this quality in a very special way. Although care for the salvation of others is and must be a task of every member of the great community of the People of God, that is to say also of all our brothers and sisters who make up the laity — as the Second Vatican Council so amply declared (19)—nevertheless you Priests are expected to have a care and commitment which are far greater and different from those of any lay person. And this is because your sharing in the priesthood of Jesus Christ differs from their sharing, “essentially and not only in degree”. (20)

In fact, the priesthood of Jesus Christ is the first source and expression of an unceasing and ever effective care for our salvation, which enables us to look to Him precisely as the Good Shepherd. Do not the words “the good shepherd is one who lays down his life for his sheep” (21) refer to the Sacrifice of the Cross, to the definitive act of Christ's priesthood? Do they not show all of us that Christ the Lord, through the sacrament of Orders, has made us sharers in His Priesthood, the road that we too must travel? Do these words not tell us that our vocation is a singular *solicitude for the salvation of our neighbor*? that this solicitude is a special *raison d'être* of our priestly life? that it is precisely this solicitude that gives it meaning, and that only through this solicitude can we find the full significance of our own life, perfection and holiness? This theme is taken up, at various places, in the conciliar Decree *Optatam Totius*. (22)

However, this matter becomes more comprehensible in the light of the words of our same Teacher, who says: “For anyone who wants to save his life will lose it; but anyone who loses his life for my sake, and for the sake of the Gos-

pel, will save it". (23) These are mysterious words, and they seem like a paradox. But they cease to be mysterious if we try to put them into practice. Then the paradox disappears, and the profound simplicity of their meaning is fully revealed. May all of us be granted this grace in our priestly life and zealous service.

"The Supreme Art is the Direction of Souls" (24)

The special care for the salvation of others, for truth, for the love and holiness of the whole People of God, for the spiritual unity of the Church—this care that has been entrusted to us by Christ, together with the priestly power, is exercised in various ways. Of course there is a difference in the ways in which you, dear Brothers, fulfil your priestly vocation. Some in the ordinary pastoral work of parishes; others in mission lands; still others in the field of activities connected with the teaching, training and education of youth, or working in the various spheres and organizations whereby you assist in the development of social and cultural life; yet others near the suffering, the sick, the neglected, and sometimes, you yourselves bed-ridden and in pain. These ways differ from one another, and it is just impossible to name them all one by one. They are necessarily numerous and different, because of the variety in the structure of human life, in social processes, and in the heritage and historical traditions of the various cultures and civilizations. Nevertheless, within all these differences, *you are always and everywhere the bearers of your particular vocation*: you are bearers of the grace of Christ, the eternal Priest, and bearers of the charism of the Good Shepherd. And this you can never forget; this you can never renounce; this you must put into practice at every moment, in every place and in every way. In this consists that "supreme art" to which Jesus Christ has called you. "The Supreme art is the direction of souls", wrote St. Gregory the Great.

I say to you, therefore, quoting these words of his: strive to be "artists" of pastoral work. There have been many such in the history of the Church. There speak to each of us, for example, St. Vincent de Paul, St. John of Avila, the holy Cure d'Ars, St. John Bosco, Blessed Maximilian Kolbe, and many, many others. Each of them was different

from the others, was himself, was the son of his own time and was "up to date" with respect to his own time. But this "bringing up to date" of each of them was an original response to the Gospel, a response needed precisely for those times; it was the response of holiness and zeal. There is no other rule apart from this for "bringing ourselves up to date", in our priestly life and activity, with our time and with the world as it is today. Without any doubt, the various attempts and projects aimed at the "secularization" of the priestly life cannot be considered an adequate "bringing up to date".

Steward and Witness

The priestly life is built upon the foundation of the Sacrament of Orders, which imprints on our soul the mark of an indelible character. This mark, impressed in the depths of our being, has its "personalistic" dynamism. *The priestly personality* must be *for others* a clear and plain sign and indication. This is the first condition for our pastoral service. The people from among whom we have been chosen and for whom we have been appointed (25) want above all to see in us such a sign and indication, and to this they have a right. It may sometimes seem to us that they do not want this, or that they wish us to be in every way "like them"; at times it even seems that they demand this of us. And here one very much needs a profound "sense of faith" and "the gift of discernment". In fact, it is very easy to let oneself be guided by appearances and fall victim to a fundamental illusion in what is essential. Those who call for the secularization of priestly life and applaud its various manifestations will undoubtedly abandon us when we succumb to temptation. We shall then cease to be necessary and popular. Our time is characterized by different forms of "manipulation" and "exploitation" of man, but we cannot give in to any of these. (26) In practical terms, the only priest who will always prove necessary to people is the priest who is conscious of the full meaning of his priesthood: the priest who believes profoundly, who professes his faith with courage, who prays fervently, who teaches with deep conviction, who serves, who puts into practice in his own life the program of the Beatitudes, who knows how to love disinterestedly, who is

close to everyone, and especially to those who are most in need.

Our pastoral activity demands that we should be close to people and all their problems, whether these problems be personal, family or social ones, but it also demands that we should be close to all these problems "in a priestly way". Only then, in the sphere of all those problems, do we remain ourselves. Therefore if we are really of assistance in those human problems, and they are sometimes very difficult ones, then we keep our identity and are really faithful to our vocation. With great perspicacity we must seek, together with all men, truth and justice, the true and definitive dimension of which we can only find in the Gospel, or rather in Christ Himself. Our task is to serve *truth and justice* in the dimensions of *human* "temporality", but *always in a perspective* that is the perspective of *eternal salvation*. This salvation takes into account the temporal achievements of the human spirit in the spheres of knowledge and morality, as the Second Vatican Council wonderfully recalled, (27) but it is not identical with them, and in fact it goes higher than them: "The things that no eye has seen and no ear has heard . . . all that God has prepared for those who love Him". (28) Our brethren in the Faith, and unbelievers too, expect us always to be able to show them this perspective, to become real witnesses to it, to be dispensers of grace, to be servants of the word of God. They expect us to be men of prayer.

Among us there are also those who have united their priestly vocation in a special way with an intense life of prayer and penance in the strictly contemplative form of their Religious Orders. Let them remember that their priestly ministry also in this form is—in a special way—"ordered" to the great solicitude of the Good Shepherd—solicitude for the salvation of every human being.

And this we must all remember: that it is not lawful for any of us to deserve the name of "hireling", that is to say the name of one "to whom the sheep do not belong", one who, "since he is not the shepherd and the sheep do not belong to him, abandons the sheep and runs away as soon as he sees the wolf coming, and then the wolf attacks and scatters the sheep; this is because he is only a hired man and

has no concern for the sheep". (29) The solicitude of every good shepherd is that all people "may have life and have it to the full", (30) so that none of them may be lost, (31) but should have eternal life. Let us endeavor to make this solicitude penetrate deeply into our souls; let us strive to live it. May it characterize our personality, and be at the foundation of our priestly identity.

(To be Continued)

THOUGHTS FROM A PEW

It is expected that I shall stand to receive Him
Whom Angels fear and adore,

That I shall not incline my head, nor

Is there time to bow or

Bend my knee.

Will someone tell me why this is to be,

What is meant? I comply but do not consent.

There are chairs between me and the tabernacle of my
Saviour.

Who dictates this behaviour,

This calamity,

This intrusion of humanity?

Yet when the insult is made clear,

I will hear,

"Don't move the chairs,

The Tabernacle shall be displaced

And, while we're at it, cannot the railing be erased?"

The cloth is rent. I comply but do not consent.

I muse on martyr and militant,

Humility and pride,

I wonder which side

I will take.

This is the new way, I am told

As I watch the role of Book and High Priest unfold.

This confusion and distraction

Masks what untold intrigue and faction,

What discontent? I comply but do not consent.

—Mary Armitage

God's Priest

FR. J. BROWN

I SPENT twenty-two years with Father Henry Shee in the Parish of St. Joseph's Wigan. Now, as the years are growing scarce, I feel that I must tell others about him while there is still time. There is a reason more urgent why this should be done; if the Church continues on her present course there will be few to understand or appreciate a life spent entirely for the love and service of Christ Our Lord. The Father of the future Priest was a Captain in the Papal Zouaves at the time of the Garibaldi trouble. He fell wounded into the hands of the enemy and was presumed dead. Much to the surprise of his captors he rose up and cried, "Long live Pope Pius the Ninth". He was struck again for his pains. This incident in the life of Captain Shee is typical of the heroic service of his priest son for Our Lord. We Curates used to call Father Shee, "The Boss" but he himself had only one Master, Christ.

What shall I say of Father Shee? There is so much to be said, but how can one describe someone who was a man, a priest and a saint?

Perhaps I should begin with one incredible fact, he himself instructed and received more than seven thousand converts into the Church. To show what a startling thing that was, I myself received about two hundred and fifty converts in my twenty-two years in Wigan, and it was fairly hard going. From my room in the Presbytery I could hear the footsteps of nine or ten converts coming up the stairs and knocking at Father Shee's door, and his jolly cry of welcome as they came in.

He was known throughout the Diocese as the Curé of Ars of Wigan, maybe because of the terrific number of hours he spent in the Confessional. He rose at five o'clock in the morning to be in the Confessional at five thirty. He then heard Confessions and distributed Holy Communion every quarter of an hour till his Mass at seven. After his Mass he went back to the Box while his Curates were saying Mass. In those days the Mills in Wigan were working

busily from an early hour in the morning and great numbers of those who worked there used to come along to receive Our Lord before their work began.

Saturday was a real marathon day. Before lunch the Clergy from Wigan and surrounding districts would come along for Confession followed by a pleasant little gossip of things that were happening in the area. At two-thirty the Parish Priest went to the Confessional Box (the Curates might go to watch Wigan Rugby). He took a cup of tea at five and then stayed in the Box to about ten o'clock, sometimes even later, especially during Lent. Things grew slack for the Curates at about nine, but the crowds were still waiting for "The Boss". I was in the Confessional next to his and I would creep out quietly to ask those waiting to come into my bench. You would hear a little shuffle, then silence. They had gone back to Father Shee.

It was an inspiration and a joy to watch him preparing for the Forty Hours. This was his day. He spent all his free hours in the Sanctuary arranging the flowers and candles. He would not accept any help. This was his personal act of Faith in the Real Presence of Our Lord. We would have loved to help, but revered and loved Father Shee and "His day"; hoping that some of the evident love and faith that he had in the Blessed Sacrament would come to us and remain.

As he grew older he was offered a Parish in Southport where he might enjoy quietness and peace. He refused because he loved his poor people. We were a slum Parish. The next time the Bishop came for Visitation we took him aside and asked him to put the suggestion to Father Shee that the Curates should take over the early turn. Without a word he took the Bishop's wish for a command, but he kept his Confessional hours.

It's a common remark that it must be hard to live with a saint; Father Shee proved beyond doubt how false are such general remarks. He was always full of fun. You could not be unhappy in his company, though we lived in the drabest district of Wigan. He never had an unkind word for his Curates, and there was little occasion for it. We loved and respected him. One day one of the Curates had gone to Manchester. He was unable to return that night

because of dense fog. He arrived back next morning at five twenty-five and met Father Shee as he was coming down the stairs from the Confessional. Can you imagine the raised eyebrows of an ordinary irate Parish Priest? "The Boss" just said, "Hello Pat, what's the weather like"? It was enough; it showed his complete trust in those who served him. An example of his deep humanity and outstanding charity. A family in my district were being evicted for arrears in rent. I could have settled the arrears, but the landlord wanted to sell. I took the problem to Father Shee. He gave me eighty pounds, the price of the house, and asked me to buy it. I never forgot the incident, I hope those who were to lose their home have never forgotten.

I left Wigan in 1957 to build a new Parish in Leigh so I was not with him when he left for Heaven. On his last day on earth he worked as usual to a late hour with Confessions and converts. He retired at about ten-thirty, had a heart attack, and that was the end of a great life for God. After his death it was discovered that he had been suffering from gangrene of the foot. No one ever knew; he would not complain.

His funeral was an historic occasion for Wigan. The streets were lined with dense crowds of every faith and none. The Chief Constable led the funeral cortege, the Town Councillors were there, a Police Motor Cycle Escort accompanied the coffin as far as the boundaries of the town. The whole town had come out to say good bye to a loving Father and a Saint.

Need we say, *Requiescat in Pace*?

Bishop (not realising he is "switched on"):

"There's something wrong with this microphone".

Congregation: "And also with you".

—R. S.

Archbishop Romero of San Salvador in Central America was murdered at Mass on March 24th of this year, 1980. In all probability, he was killed by a hired gunman in the service of a plantocracy that lived off the sweat of El Salvador's landless peasants.

Though written within days of the Archbishop's death, publication of this article has had to be delayed until now because of printing and publication arrangements. This makes little difference. For those willing to learn them, the lessons of the Archbishop's death are for all time.

CURRENT COMMENT

Death Comes to the Archbishop

THE EDITOR

THE news came overnight, suddenly; dramatic confirmation in the concrete of thoughts that had long been mine and that had taken increasingly tight hold of me during the past few days. To the point where I was finding it next to impossible to think of anything else. Let me explain.

Theory and Practice

I had been making my way through a clutch of books that dwelt, each in its own way, with the massive problems that confront the Church in Latin America and, for that matter, in the rest of the developing world. There were the published conclusions of the Puebla Conference of Latin American Bishops over whose opening session Pope John Paul presided early in 1979; then, the Reith Lectures (1978) of Dr. Edward Norman, Dean of Peterhouse, Cambridge, which I saw as an incidental flicking round the problems of under-development from the coziness of a

Cambridge common room; finally, the intensely moving account of her life by the wife of a Bolivian tin-miner and entitled so rightly, *Let Me Speak*. In my mind, as I read and collated, I was placing the conclusions reached by each against the other, weighing the pro's and con's; working out my own approach to the problems that confront the Church in its task of evangelizing the poor and the oppressed of today's Third World. Throughout, as I thought and tried to work out, there was a sense of futility. I kept saying to myself, However sound the theory, however well worked out, what use is it without the practice. I can go on until the cows come home, talking about this problem, writing about it, working out the principles, formulating the guide-lines. Others can do the same; but the real question is this, Will the poor and the oppressed ever come to the Church unless and until they see the priests of the Church, in particular, and, indeed, the Bishops of the Church actively and lovingly sharing their burdens with them and standing by them, not as a gimmick—they would be very quick to recognise that; but simply because they love them for the sake of the Poor Man of Galilee, who died that all of us might share new life in love with Him. This at base is the Christian reality, yet there is little real witness to it in our lives. Love is not shared. Because it is not, the poor see themselves as unwanted, instruments only without charge over their lives, isolated, victims of forces outside their control, doomed to frustration. Theory cannot touch this kind of situation; words are futile. The time is for deeds. We have reached a point now at which an ounce of practice outweighs by far a ton of theory. Yet the ounce is still not given. Our reaction to the problem of the poor is to give everything short of ourselves; thereby to evade the issue, which is that the poor and the dispossessed, of the Third World particularly, feel apart from the Church and will never find their way into the Church until the priests of the Church find their way into their lives, sharing what they have with those who are, in fact, their brothers and sisters. There is no ideology here, no question of Right or Left within this context. The question is one of reaction to the central Christian reality, which is that of Christ in our lives. Life shared with Him in love—which is what Chris-

tianity means—must flow out on those who share that life or are destined for it and are made thereby our brothers and sisters in Christ. On all, as He commanded; and particularly on the poor, the dispossessed and the oppressed whose dignity is denied; in whom life shared with Christ can find no fullness because of the poverty of their condition. In their persons, Christ our Brother and theirs, calls most specially for the love that will lead us on His account to share what we have with the poor, take up their burden of suffering and stand by their cause. “Whatsoever”, he said, “You do to the least of these my little ones, you do it to Me”. The overflow of the love we share with Christ must be on them particularly. The very nature of their situation—with the life of Christ crippled within them by reason of their deprivation—commands that this be so.

Option for the Poor

Our option, then, must be for the poor—and particularly for the poor of the Third World who are the most deprived of all—not through bogus sentiment, racism in reverse or false ideology, but simply because in the poor and oppressed of the World, Christ cries out for our love more loudly than anywhere else. And that cry will not be met — no more will Christianity be what it should be or, indeed, be recognised for what it really is—unless and until the priests of the Church, in particular, take the step that must be taken. They must share their lives with the poor; taking to themselves the poverty and oppression of the poor, as some, thank God, are doing already, in witness of their love. This is the first step, the vital step that the priest must take, taking Christ in himself to the poor so that having Him they may *be more*, even though they *have*, as the priest now has because he is one with them, no more than the barest material existence. This done, ‘the bond in Christ now forged between priest and poor, they can work together to have the more they need and to which they have a right so that their dignity may be sustained. Man does not live, indeed, by bread alone; but he does need bread in order that he may be helped not to live by bread alone. There is no paradox here. Bread on its own is not the answer to poverty; which is short for saying that material

improvement on its own is not the answer; which means that the basic problem of the poor and the oppressed is not solved by material improvement alone. This, indeed, is vital, but it is not the final answer. It cannot be, for the root of the problem of the poor is found in their helplessness; the degradation of their dignity which comes from their inability to control, as they have every right to control, their own lives; the lonely, sub-human apartness which their almost total dependence on outside forces inflicts on them, labelling them, in the process, as so much unwanted flotsam, a sub-human species and nothing more. Their yearning is for the recognition of their dignity; their cry, quite rightly, for the concrete admission of their equality in Christ with all men; which is the essence of the Christian thing. And this only the love of Christ—in action as I have described it above — can bring. Love shared between those who are brothers in Christ—given to the poor of the Third World by the priests of the Church in particular and without thought of themselves; the core of that which will free the poor from oppression lies there. Love without stint will give them the truth that will set them free. Given this love, the rest will come. Without it, the poor will remain without recognition of their dignity, whether material improvements come their way or not.

This way, then, I was thinking, as I have thought so often before. The theory is there. It has been there for a hundred years. Since then, so much has been written. There has been such a torrent of words on what is called "The Catholic Social Problem" or "The Problem of Poverty" or whatever you want to call it; so many lectures, seminars and conferences; commissions, committees, institutes, centres and God knows what. So much organized, well-meaning, impersonal relief; so much done *for* the poor, so little done *with* them. So much "charity"; so little love. All around the problem, but not yet into it, for the one thing necessary is not yet there in any way as it should be. A tiny emergence here and there; no more. In general, no giving of self in love as central to the solution of the problems of the poor. Everything, in fact, but that; which means just about nothing. The whole as convincing as the wooden crook I found a bishop carrying around in place of

a crozier—evidence, as he thought, of his pastoral concern for his people. In fact, a fake. Showbiz. No more.

Death Comes to the Archbishop

Then it came. A friend told me at breakfast on Tuesday, March 25th: "Archbishop Romero has been killed saying Mass yesterday"! What—I dashed at the morning papers. There was nothing there. It had happened too late, too far away from the published news next morning. I had to wait for the evening papers to get the first account in print. I found it headlined in the *Evening Standard*. The Archbishop of San Salvador, capital of the tiny Republic in Central America that bears the near name, had been shot at the altar of a pint-sized chapel, as he held up the chalice immediately after the consecration at Mass. A minute or two before, in the course of his homily to the handful of sisters and layfolk, who were present at his evening Mass in this chapel attached to a hospital that he had founded for the incurably ill, Archbishop Romero spoke the following words: "This Holy Mass is an act of faith . . . in this chalice wine becomes the blood that was the price for the salvation of this people . . . may this sacrifice encourage us to give our body to suffering and pain the way Christ did, not for Himself, but for justice and peace".

The words were prophetic. Only a minute or two after they were spoken, the body of the Archbishop was given not only to suffering and pain, but to death. After the consecration of the wine, as he raised up the chalice, a bullet smashed into his chest. It was fired, in all likelihood, by a hired gunman, through a door or window of the chapel. The Archbishop would not have been surprised. A few weeks before, he had learnt that outspoken words of his had led to his placement at the top of a death list drawn up by the "White Warriors"; these being a particularly foul excrescence on the ever-smelling body of a small, immensely rich plantocracy that holds the bulk of El Salvador's poverty-stricken, peasant population in oppressive and degrading peonage. It is, in all probability, they who killed him either directly themselves or, as seems more likely, by hiring a "hit man" to do the job. Dying, on his

way to hospital, the Archbishop was heard to say, "May God have mercy on the assassin". No hate from the lips of a man in whose heart there had always been love. One thinks of the words of his Brother, Christ, as he hung dying on the Cross: "Father forgive them for they know not what they do". Here was Christ again, crashing down from the altar with a bullet in His chest. Here He was, too, in the persons of those poor peasants, brothers and sisters of the Archbishop who had taken them to himself for Christ's sake, shouldering their burdens, standing with enduring courage for the cause of their dignity, which an infamous landlord clique had degraded and stamped on for years; in addition, through its hold on the Government and Military, crushed with savage violence the peasants who rose up in their poverty, to protest that they were more than dogs. Where their so-called Catholic landlords were concerned they were, in fact, just that; no more than garbage for the guns of the thugs they hired to keep their peasants, as they would call them, in what they referred to as their place. Can self-contained arrogance and insult to Christ go further than this? I would think not.

Repression and Revolution

Archbishop Romero, then, was a thorn in the flesh of the infamous fourteen families of El Salvador, the 2% of its population that owned 60% of the country's land and kept 75% of its rural population at the level of landless peasants, on a pittance and in economic bondage to themselves. The shattering thing is that this has been going on for years and that the Church has been in El Salvador for years. Until very recently, I am afraid, making no protest, certainly taking no action against the crushing of Christ in the landless poor; sucked into an Establishment, I am afraid, which lived off the sweat of the poor. Archbishop Romero was a thorn in the side of this oppressive so-called Catholic minority, not because he liked being a thorn, but because he loved the poor. Neither was he content that love should express itself in simple relief work on their account. Their right under God was to conditions that accorded with their dignity as human beings and brothers of Christ, a purchased people redeemed by His blood.

Those who resisted the expression of that right, as the land-owning clique in San Salvador was resisting it, had to be withstood—if necessary and in the last resort by force of arms—as Pope Paul VI had indicated in *Populorum Progressio*, Pius XI in his Letter to the Mexican Bishops in 1927, year of the martyrdom of Father Miguel Pro, S.J. and, long before that, Bellarmine and Suarez and other great political philosophers of that day. The Archbishop's remarks in this context are interesting. They are found in an interview given to a correspondent of *Prensa Latina*, one of the last interviews he gave before his death. In answer to the question:

On several occasions you have pointed to the work carried out by the Christian communities in El Salvador. However, leaders of these same communities were brutally assassinated. A similar fate has been met by lay preachers. What path is left open to a people who are being assassinated for using peaceful means to achieve social justice?

Archbishop Romero replied:

I have wept for them, and with them for many more who were preachers, working in our communities, truly Christian men. One of them in particular, who was assassinated in Aguilares was called; the Gospel man. Profound religion leads to political commitment and in a country such as ours where injustice reigns, conflict is inevitable.

Right, then, this is also underlined in *Populorum Progressio*, Christians have no fear of combat, they know how to fight, but they prefer to speak the language of peace. Nevertheless, when a dictatorship seriously threatens human rights and the common good of the nation, when they become insupportable and close themselves to all channels of dialogue, understanding and rationality, when this occurs, then the Church speaks of the legitimate right to insurrectional violence.

Earlier on in the same interview the Archbishop had said:

Those who have been assassinated are precisely those who have committed themselves to the liberation of the Salvadorean people.

The situation *had* become intolerable, but so was the condition of the Salvadorean people. The unyielding savagery for the fourteen families had taken things to the point where force might well have to be used in the interests of political and social change that would allow for that alteration in the condition of the Salvadorean people that their dignity demanded. The Archbishop saw this clearly. He faced the logic of his position with courage and was not afraid to run away from it. In so doing he was *not* playing politics, as some Catholics are bound to accuse him of doing. He was withstanding political repression in aid of those evil men who thrust degrading conditions on the peasant poor of his country. In this he was right. The politicians were playing havoc with the rights of the poor, of which the Church is guardian. Under such circumstances, she is bound to offer resistance and, if necessary and by the way of last resort, to support those who carry that resistance to the point of armed struggle.

Conditions of the Peasant Poor

It is important to look for a moment at the conditions thrust on the peasant poor of El Salvador. I cannot give you a direct look, for I have not the material to hand; but I can give you a look by parallel in the shape of a postage-stamp picture of the way in which the peasants of Guatemala live. They are neighbours of the Salvadoreans and their story was told briefly in the *Guardian* for March 31st of this year. I quote:

"Migrant labour is at the heart of Guatemala's economic system. Four million rural poor, most of them Indians descended from the Maya, scratch a bare existence from growing maize on plots that are shrinking by inheritance with each generation: with no jobs in their home villages, an estimated 1.5 million workers migrate for up to three months each year, often taking wives and children with them.

"The great *haciendas* growing coffee, cotton and sugar keep a small skeleton staff of permanent labourers, but rely on the migrants at harvest time. The appalling living and working conditions in which they keep them are the foundation on which the fabulous fortunes of Guatamala's elite are built.

"Food rations are free for workers—but they have to be shared with the children for whom nothing is provided. The basic worker's ration is six small tortillas plus once ounce of beans per meal, three times a day. After sharing that leaves Jose (a migrant worker) with four tortillas and about 10 beans per meal. That has to sustain him through 10 or 12 hours in broiling sun, picking ripe red berries from the coffee bushes to fill huge 165 lb. baskets. Pay is by results, and averages \$1.50 a day.

"Like all migrants, the Luis family (of migrant workers) spend their nights in a *galera* or *galley*—no more than a vast tin roof without walls, clean water supply or toilets, and with a mud floor. A few build themselves little rooms inside the galley of split bamboo. In Luis' camp, about 50 families have built a cluster of low straw tents outside the galley, each one housing up to seven or eight people. The more resourceful have lined their tents with polythene sheets. But that will not hold the rain back.

"The *galeras* are hotbeds of disease. Women shiver with malaria on a mattress of corrugated cardboard. The eyes of a little girl of six are half closed with matter. Drinking water has to be fetched in cans from a stream half a mile away, and is white with pollution.

"Many migrants do not return from the harvest. Some are poisoned by insecticides sprayed indiscriminately and excessively from light planes. Others die in horrific road accidents as badly maintained lorries, bringing them from their villages packed like cattle to the slaughter, plunge off mountain roads.

"The migrants are recruited in squads of 20 to 300 people from the same village. Often, the recruiter will pocket the migrant's entire wages, owed to him because of loans at 100 per cent. interest, contracted in the summer months to buy food on the market when the peasants' own granaries are running out of maize.

"The system is almost self-perpetuating. Officially there are laws controlling conditions . . . But regulations are ignored and a bribe quickly diverts any inquiries.

"Only effective peasants trade unions could ensure any improvements in conditions. But peasant leaders are prime targets for the country's Right-wing death squads, and trouble-makers who insist on their rights will be sent home immediately and not rehired. Amnesty International says that there have been at least 20,000 political assassinations since 1956 . . ."

Death and Extermination

The situation in El Salvador is not dissimilar as regards the conditions thrust on that country's peasant poor or the repressive violence meted out to those who would rid them of those conditions. Only two weeks before his death, Archbishop Romero said of the land reforms proposed by the present US-backed Government of El Salvador, only to be aborted in practice, that they "must be judged in the context of death and extermination". Between January of this year and the Archbishop's own death at the end of March, 700 of those described as "left-wing militants and sympathisers" have been assassinated. The ruling families of El Salvador, no more than the ruling families of Guatemala, will not surrender one jot or tittle of this despotic and ill-gotten power. This appalling situation, which is one of sustained insult to Christ in his poor is not confined to Central America. I only wish it was. Chile has its story to tell. So has Brazil. So have other South American countries. Much nearer home, in the Alentejo district of Portugal—a cereal-growing area of vast estates, absentee landlords and largely landless, migrant agricultural labourers — estates were seized by the peasants and farmed co-operatively in the wake of the revolution that came in 1974. Those co-operatives are now in process of being broken up, as I write these lines. Of the conditions under which the Alentejo agricultural labourers worked, Dr. Luis Manuel Capoulis, a sociologist at the Ministry of Agriculture, has been quoted in the *Guardian* (2/4/80) as saying:

"The cause of the Revolution in the Alentejo was an extremely unjust social structure, with a very poor rural proletariat obliged to work six or seven months of the year with no guarantee of work for the rest of the year.

"Before the Revolution, when a peasant wanted to talk to his boss when the boss was in a cafe, he was obliged to wait outside the door with his cap in his hand".

Brothers in Christ or slave-owner and slave? Which is it? No further words are needed.

Brother of the Poor

Archbishop Romero gave himself without stint to the poor, the dispossessed and the oppressed of his country. He made no neat distinctions to let himself out of the confrontation he knew would come to him when he took up the cause of those he saw so rightly and loved so well as his brothers and sisters in Christ. He took them to himself. Their cause was his cause; their suffering his. There was no ideology here. No partisan politics. Only love: "My little children for whom I am in labour until Christ be formed in you". And so the Archbishop laboured to free them from the oppression that crippled Christ within them; denying them the fullness that He claimed for them; crucifying Him anew in every one of themselves. And when His cry in them for freedom from oppression was met with repression, the Archbishop stood out fearlessly against the oppressors, rebuked them to their face and gave public voice to the just demands of his brothers and sisters in Christ, the poor. Each Sunday in his cathedral, without a semblance of pomp or circumstance, quietly, yet with enduring fearlessness, he spoke out on their account. And they came in their thousands to hear him—young and old and middle-aged, men and women; all poor. They packed their cathedral each Sunday to hear their brother speak out on their account, with love in his heart. This is the Church as it should be; the giving of ourselves in love that Christ cries out for from us all. No long-drawn, intricate theses here. These have their uses indeed; but not in the sort of situation that prevails today in El Salvador or elsewhere. There has been plenty of theory; but almost no love—of the sort that causes one for Christ's sake to give oneself direct, like that. It is this that Archbishop Romero gave. Here, in him, was the ounce of practice that outweighed any ton of theory. His giving and his dying outweighed infinitely all the theoretical treatises, the sermons, lectures, con-

ferences, committees, congresses, pastoral and social centres that you could cram into the Central American Republics in a hundred years.

Other Bishops Please Copy

Archbishop Romero was not a particularly learned man. There was nothing of the great prelate about him. He lived in the utmost simplicity. He was seen going about, as a rule, in a pair of scuffed shoes and a worn, somewhat crumply suit. His story is simple. He loved his brothers and sisters, the poor, gave himself to them, became one with them in Christ, faced their oppressors with quiet, unaffected, persistent courage and was murdered on their account. This is the Church as it should be. Other Bishops please copy. Were you to do so, the problems which you think of today as besetting you would soon disappear. Archbishop Romero shines out because he took the one step we all should take. He gave himself without fear for Christ's sake. That is all and that is everything. The Church will not be herself; Christ will not reach fullness within her unless and until we all do that. For so much that besets us now is of our own making; due to our own failure to give the whole of ourselves as we should; that last bit of ourselves that makes all the difference. Rather than do this we tend to create imaginary enemies, laying the troubles of our time within the Church at their door. This is the mistake. We should lay them primarily at our own. The last enemy is always ourselves.

THE QUESTION ?

(On hearing of plans to vandalise another Sanctuary.)

Who took over a flourishing vineyard
and left behind an arid wilderness?

Nemo judex in propria causa.

Patiens est Deus sed in fine Judex.

—Anon.

The temptation of the Christian living in the world is always to let himself be bound by its categories. This he must resist at all costs.

The Christian Mind

2: LOOKING TO THE ETERNAL

HENRY EDWARDS

A mark of many religions is that they ask men to take grave notice of the supernatural. Judaism and Islam in particular must here be named. Both religions call in the adherents to look beyond this earthly life to a heavenly. For such religions there is the fact of Heaven and the fact of Hell. In our time the extraordinary revival of Islam, one which Belloc prophesied, has made radical alterations to world affairs in a matter of a few years. The revolution in Iran is the result not of a materialist view of things, but of the power of a book and a prophet. It is, by accident, almost a refutation of Marxism.

The Gospel and the World

There is, however, a vital difference between the Gospel and these world religions. Christians take no credit for believing that the soul of man is immortal or, that there is a Heaven and that there is a Hell. The Gospel is unique in teaching that a man's immortal soul can be raised to a degree often called the supernatural. That is to say with the Apostle, in Christ we are able to be a new creation (2 Cor. 5, 17). To all men the Gospel calls: "Awake thou that sleepest and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light" (Ephesians, 5, 14). The pledge of all Christian action is not future, but eternal and, therefore, present. In several passages of Holy Scripture, as in John 6, 54, we are clearly taught that the Christian is not merely given eternal life after death but has it now, if indeed he really be a Christian. That this eternal life is not to be understood simply as existing in Heaven after death is clear from the words of the Beloved Apostle, John; "No murderer hath

eternal life abiding in him" (1 John 3, 15). He has an immortal soul: that is the tragedy. The Gospel is so radically different from all that belongs to what the ancients called "the world" with its "pride of life", that it is extremely hard for the Christian to speak to the condition of the secularist. The gap is huge. Not only must the Christian see the universe as sustained by the power and the love of God, but he must also see the time-constrained order of his daily life within the context of the eternal. Not only is this world an inconclusive experience, a temporary hospice perhaps, but containing the City of Destruction, the Town called Morality, and Vanity Fair. The Christian is plagued by despondency, by erring towards Mount Sinai, by trying to by-pass Calvary, by sleeping up Hill Difficulty, by fear of the lions, by the onslaught of Appolyon, by humiliation, by the shadow of death, by despair in Doubting Castle, by the net of the flatterer and by the Demas, who would attempt so skillfully to get him to gather from the silver mine. He must constantly remember his scroll which tells him that this world is *not* The Thing.

The "this worldiness" of the secularist appears as the old Adam, who, however, gives us death as wages. But the secularist who may well be a decent chap does not want us to worry about death, about the time-bounded order of human life. Let the senses alone judge of things, so that only what they judge as good shall constitute the totality of life. This is what the secularist asks, and so often has his way. The battlefield is within us. There is always something of the secular in our wounded nature, even when greatly graced. "O wretched man that I am", cries St. Paul, so alive to this warfare, though he at once pleads for Grace. But secularism will not allow for Grace; and the advance of secularism shows itself within the Church herself in various cunning variations of Pelagianism which, however disguised, amounts to a denial of Grace.

Temptation and Time

A temptation may be described as a subtle and secular secular view of the eternal in some chrononological status. This is clear if we persist in thinking of the eternal as the life which succeeds the life on earth. It is only too com-

mon to hear people saying that they have no wish to live on and on and on and on with never any term. They may attempt some cheap wit about playing harps. Heaven is not, of course, going on and on and on. I am no theologian or scholar; but I know enough to know that eternity cannot so be thought of. Probably good men who deny the truth of the Gospel do not intend to debunk it in this way; but there is a tricky process by which we Christians are led to dechristianise our minds by attaching ourselves to the purely chrononological or time-bound. And so, when it becomes necessary for the Christian to work with the secularist in some venture aimed at producing some good thing, the Christian must never lose sight of the fact that, in so working, he is taking part in a battle that splits the universe. He must not be silent about the time-locked life of living in and of the world, the failing of all good fortune, the dependence of all men upon their Maker.

Christian and Secularist

Now I am quite sure that when the Christian is so engaged, he does in some respects distinguish himself from the secularist with whom he may be collaborating. He will probably pray. Like other Catholics, I offer my prayers at Mass for all sorts of temporary matters. The Christian tends, if he be not careful, to subordinate his Gospel life to the secular. That is to say, while he may very probably maintain a secret spiritual life (he may even be on the ascent of Carmel), he does not express his thought as a Christian in the world. He is in peril of having a split mind. No doubt most of us have noticed the odd and embarrassing pause after some cleric has uttered a grace at a public dinner. It may last only a second or two. There is a shuffle both physical and mental as we push aside any rag of pious sentiment in order to get down to the soup. Although I do not commend in the actual context, I do think it worth while relating the words of the French Quaker who escaped from the Jansenist thrall, Etienne de Grellet: "I think I have for many years never broken bread without thinking of the broken body of my Redeemer". What, must we leave the breaking of bread in terms of piety only to the Mass? But this is only by way of illustration. I am, of course, not asking for a sort of religious

fanaticism. But St. Paul was at least in no doubt about bishops. They were to preach the word in season and out of season (2 Tim. 4, 2). Perhaps the early Christians were our shock troops and that we are at the end of an age. If the secularist assumes that he has the right to talk of secular things when he chooses, the Christian must not let him get away with it. It will not do for some conventional prayer at the start of a conference to do with a humanitarian project, so that someone will be tempted to say that the Church has made an impression. I believe there are still prayers in the English House of Commons.

Near-triumph of the Secular

Until fairly recently, the secular view was almost triumphant. It seemed as if there was a growing increase in the standard of living (though what "standard" is set I know not), a highly organised civilisation, social services, marvellous scientific progress which, to quote G.K.C. would make the stars suburban; and so many aid organizations licking the Third World into tolerable shape. In the last decade many of us must have discerned a change; the same old world rushing from optimism to pessimism. No Christian is pessimist or optimist. I mean that, as a Christian, he has the faculty of rising above the two errors. I have been rebuked very often for defending my patron saint's apparently dreadful description of the world as "*massa damnata*", though St. Augustine was only latinising a Greek word which meant some dough not fit for baking. What he called "the torrent of human custom" rushes downwards and essentially away from God. Was my patron then a pessimist? Very far from that. Only the superficial could call him one. For him, all depends upon the final realisation of the City of God in an eternal happiness. To quote Gilson in his study of St. Augustine: "The deepest meaning of history lies (with St. Augustine) in the gradual formation of this City in accordance with the designs of Providence; it gives each people its reason for existence, assigns its rôle and reveals its destiny".

Concealed Collision

Having insulated myself from the charge of thinking of eternity only in relation to life after death, it is still very

important to consider that aspect of it, for it is not taken into account by the secularist. Or hardly at all. I qualify because the intelligent secularist will consider the fact that Christians believe in Heaven and Hell and that, if he is to work with them, in some humane task for example, he had better weigh this consideration, though he will not be so far wrong in supposing that the Christian will probably make light of the matter. But what price do we pay for the apparently easy co-existence or *détente* of what should be the Christian mind with the secular mind? The collision is frightful: and it is concealed. On the one hand, there is what is for most people the easy job of living for round about 70 years, cushioned by the State, eating, drinking, sleeping, bingoing, amusing ourselves and buying culture, with some education thrown in, even though it be not *disciplina mollis*.

There are two ways of looking at this situation. One can agree with the secularist that this world is what he thinks it is, but that there is more to it than that. Or one can say that this world is so presented to us by Holy Church as to make us see it in a manner radically different, *sub specie aeternitatis*. One needs to exercise caution: the phrase *terram despicere* must not be translated "to despise the world" but rather to look down upon it from the height of the eternal; so that, as St. Augustine was eager to point out, the world has a certain beauty which should make the Christian aware of Beauty herself. Meanwhile, do we mentally inhabit an order of being which is superior to decay and death and what people call human progress? No doubt most of us are well enough in respect of our moral condition, though not as our thinking. We do not bring into the deliberative life of society a certain tone which reflects the eternal. No doubt we are exhorted from pulpits to pray in relation to our life in "modern times"; but the Christian mind against the world seems missing. Do I hear a noise of resistance? I may be told by many a Christian that there is no point in parading Christian theology where it is not wanted; where, in fact, we suppose it is really out of place. If, however, it is the intellectual expression of that Faith which is our boon, how dare we let our minds work without it? We do not shove it forward to get con-

verts: we use it to gain clarity and integrity and so to be understood. The first Pope called us a "peculiar people", but so many of us lean over backwards to show that we are not like that, at least not outside a church building or our prayer times.

Mr. E. I. Watkin in his *Catholic Art and Culture*, written at the beginning of the second world war, did put forward one reasonable answer to what may be called my criticism. He wrote: "The old Catholic religion-culture of Europe is dead and is being carried out for burial. It cannot be raised from its tomb. Its world year is over, has ended in mid-winter. For its matter the inheritance of classical culture no longer exists. It has been destroyed, overwhelmed by a vast influx of new knowledge, by the scientific mass civilisation of the modern world". In the least fortunate of St. Paul's addresses—that to the Athenians—he may very well have been teaching from a Greek view of "ages" where (vide Acts 17, 26) he speaks of the nations to each of which the Unknown God has given cycles it was to pass through. Knox notes that such "cycles" may have been "decisive moments in history". Watkin's book itself treats of the subject in this manner, giving to the Graeco-Roman or Western Christian civilisation the seasons from the classical autumn, and Christian spring to winter, the modern world. This, of course, smacks strongly of Spengler and other historicists. The Church is nervous of historicism and rightly so; but this does in no way preclude such cycles. And I believe that Watkin happens to be on the right track. At the same time, he wrote in 1939 (the book appeared in 1941) and the author admitted his debt to Christopher Dawson, who took much the same scan in his *Making of Europe and Medieval Religion*.

David after the Collapse of the Roman Empire

Some years ago when I wrote for Catholic weeklies I had somewhat to say for St. David's Day in *The Universe* about the circumstance in which David lived after the collapse of the ancient empire; so that, when he declared just before his death, "Be joyous and keep the Faith", he was not thinking as we think of the Faith as something to be set against un-Faith. In earlier times saints would often com-

bat heresies and in that they were "keeping the Faith" just as St. Paul demanded of Bishop St. Timothy. I risk the charge of being existentialist by saying that David kept the Faith and urged others to keep it by means of an act of freedom, which constituted something by asserting it. No matter for that charge, since existentialism has several definitions. To put it another way; for St. David, keeping the Faith had no antithesis. I have read of not a few people who have "come to believe", as Scripture calls it, without anything like what we should call some evidence of credibility; and in the spring time when David flourished, the cataphatic tendency (opposed so strongly by certain Eastern Fathers) to argue and deduce would have been absent from the embryonic Cambria—for the bare spring of his age.

But we may be passing through this very age, an age when men appeared to spurn culture in order, had they known it and may have known it, that there would arise a religion-culture. Of times and seasons at least as to their length we may be unaware; but we may now be almost bound to leave the world and its philosophy much to itself in order that, according to the designs of Providence, we, as members of Holy Church, may bring back the Gospel as an architectonic, not only on behalf of all whose names are written in the Book of Life, but on behalf of the City of Man.

FURTHER ODDITIES

Again, how very odd,
That when I die,
Please God, a faithful Catholic,
There will not be
A noble and compassionate Requiem for me,
But flowers, white vestments, general jollity,
And hymns to keep our minds off Purgatory;
Brief prayer
In trite vernacular.
Illogically, since I shan't be there,
The very prospect of it makes me sick.

—S. G.

Until the day he was assassinated on March 24, Archbishop Oscar Romero of San Salvador championed the causes of human rights and peace. This is one of the last interviews he gave to a correspondent from *Prensa Latina*.

ARCHBISHOP ROMERO:

A Last Interview

In your opinion, what is the cause of the violence in El Salvador?

THE cause of all our problems is the oligarchy, that small nucleus of families who do not concern themselves with the plight of the people, except in so much as they have need of them as a source of cheap and plentiful labour. The industrial companies, national and foreign, base their competitiveness in the international market upon starvation wages and this explains the vehement opposition to any type of reforms or to union organisations which seek to improve the conditions of the people.

This oligarchy prevents peasant or worker unionisation since it considers it dangerous to its economic interests. For this nucleus of families the repression against the people is transformed into a necessity in order to maintain and increase the profit margins, even at the cost of the increasing poverty of the working class . . . Thus the concentration of wealth and property brings with it the concentration of political, social and economic power, without which it would be impossible to maintain those privileges.

That is the root of the structural violence and of the repressive violence in our country and, in the long-term, the principal cause of our economic, political and social underdevelopment . . . The armed forces are responsible for protecting the interests of the oligarchy, looking after the economic and political structures under the pretext that it is in the interest of national security.

El Salvador is a country where the vast majority of the population is Catholic. Nevertheless, here we find kidnapping, torture and assassination of priests who promote the liberation of man.

THE situation of social injustice is so serious, it has reached such a state, that the very faith has been perverted. It has been transformed into a crime to defend economic interests, material interests . . . It has reached such a level of perversion, torture and assassination of priests, that those who have been assassinated are precisely those who have committed themselves to the liberation of the Salvadorean people.

And in your opinion, what has been the role of the Church in the process of liberation of the Salvadorean people?

ABOVE all, that it be truly "Church". It is necessary to call injustice by its name, to serve truth . . . to denounce the exploitation of man by man, discrimination, violence inflicted by man against his own people, against his spirit, against his conscience, and against his convictions . . . to promote integral liberation of man . . . to urge structural changes, to accompany the people who struggle for their liberation.

It is a task of a true Church to work among the poor, with whom it must stand in solidarity, even to the point of risk and the destiny of persecution, willing to give the maximum witness of love, to defend and to support those that Jesus especially loved . . .

On several occasions you have pointed to the work carried out by the Christian communities in El Salvador. However, leaders of those same communities, were brutally assassinated. A similar fate has been met by lay preachers. What path is left open to a people who are being assassinated for using peaceful means to achieve social justice?

I HAVE wept for them, and with them for many more who were preachers, working in our communities, truly Chris-

tian men. One of them in particular, who was assassinated in Aguilares was called: the Gospel man. Profound religion leads to political commitment in a country such as ours where injustice reigns, conflict is inevitable . . .

Right then, this is also underlined in *Populorum Progressio*, Christians have no fear of combat, they know how to fight, but they prefer to speak the language of peace. Nevertheless, when a dictatorship seriously threatens human rights and the common good of the nation, when they become insupportable and close themselves to all channels of dialogue, understanding and rationality, when this occurs, then the Church speaks of the legitimate right to insurrectional violence?

And in this war, will you, as a pastor, continue at the side of the people?

THAT is what I propose to do and I ask God that he help me to be sufficiently strong, because I fear the weakness of the flesh . . . in difficult moments we all suffer fear, the instinct for self-preservation is very strong, and for that I ask for help . . . Help not only for me, but for all those who are carrying out this pastoral work, that we might remain at our posts because we have much to do; even if it only be to collect the corpses and to administer absolution to the dead . . . the flame of social justice must always remain alight in the hearts of the Salvadorean people.

How Many Are There?

BURKE COSGROVE

“**T**HE Silent Majority” is a political term. A politician says, “The majority are on my side, although they do not speak out”. A parish priest thinks of this term when a parishioner laments — often with tears — some condition in the Church. The priest wonders how many such lamenters there are and is consoled when he makes the lamenter feel better. The priest wishes that he could accomplish the same with all such Catholics.

Every priest who is loyal to the Pope and the Magisterium must have his own approach in this situation.

First of all, if *loyal* priests are sometimes saddened and bewildered by shenanigans, what must the ordinary loyal parishioner feel? After all, a priest has the advantage of a knowledge of Church history. He reads many publications, is familiar with all types of clergy, is clear on the distinction between the Magisterium and theological opinion, is constantly dealing with the deep things of the soul, has more time to pray and meditate than lay people, and has the special grace of the priestly vocation. Therefore he is able to take much of the shenanigans with a grain of salt. And yet, even *he* can sometimes be shocked to the point of depression.

Let me speak from my experience as a parish priest. I have surprised some parishioners by agreeing with them in their complaints. They had not expected this. They had thought themselves somewhat guilty in even mentioning the matter and had done so with reluctance. They sighed with relief when they got my message—“Welcome to the Club”. Perhaps it was an outrageous liturgy which had offended them or a contradiction of the Holy Father in the “Catholic” press or a priest’s downgrading of the Rosary or the Tabernacle. When I told them that these things were indeed shocking, the ice between us was broken and they poured out all their woes. I told them that there were millions of lay people and priests and nuns and brothers and bishops who were suffering too but that their cries were drowned out by “the others”.

This idea—that the clergy was *also* suffering—had not occurred to these parishioners. They had come into the confessional box to say, “Father, I cannot stand the way a certain priest says Mass. I get so upset that I cannot pray and sometimes I even leave before the Mass is over. I have even missed Sunday Mass because of him”. Their tone conveyed that they blamed themselves. When I told them the priest was wrong, that they should avoid his Masses if they could and go to another Mass, they noticeably relaxed.

In the “*old days*”, when the mere fact of being a priest meant that you were a *loyal* priest, it was rare for a priest to say another priest was “wrong”. Everything possible was done to excuse his conduct or his words. Those days are gone. When priests today violate the official liturgy and the Magisterium without a blush the laity should be told. “They are wrong”.

A good example of this is when a parishioner says, “A priest told me in the confessional, ‘Don’t bother me with these little sins and don’t keep coming back here each week’”. The parishioner is grateful to hear me say that the Official Church wishes him to confess frequently in order to get the grace of the Sacrament. The emphasis on the Official Church must be brought home to him. He must realise that that priest was wrong in not giving him the message of the Official Church.

Sometimes a parishioner comes back to the Sacraments after a long absence. When he or she is asked, “What happened?”, the answer is, “Father, this is not the same Church that I grew up in. I lost interest and stopped going”. Again they are relieved when the priest agrees with so much of what they say. The *abuses* have turned them off, and so the priest has to point out the distinction between the Church and the people in it, how there is no alternative but to stick with the Church, no matter how foolish individual actions may be, how Christ is with the Church till the end of time, how prayers and faithful attendance are needed to help the Church survive the nonsense of individuals, how loyal Catholics need to sense each other’s presence in order to keep up their courage.

It occurs to me at this point that the title of this article could be, "Misery Loves Company". But the point is—so many of the miserable Catholic laity do not realize that they *have* company and that that company comprises many of the clergy. These lay people think they are alone or are few and powerless. I know that when I have told the agonizing soul that "there are thousands like you, even among priests", they have been surprised. And incidentally, that is something I believe we priests should keep in mind—that many of the laity can be truly ignorant of the condition of the Church. After all, they have to scramble so hard for a daily living that they can't possibly keep up on Church things. What they know mostly comes from their eyes and ears on Sunday and, unfortunately, that's enough for them to form erroneous opinions. They think that they are seeing THE CHURCH in action, when it is only an ignorant maverick calling attention to himself. They can be hurt by this and, as we have seen, can even abandon this "Church" which they have seen and heard in the actions of the maverick. Tragically, it may be a matter of years—perhaps never—before some loyal priest gets the opportunity to point out to them that there is such a thing as the Official Church which is without stain or wrinkle and that what has turned them off has not been this Official Church but the illicit actions of her so-called "representatives".

The writer is not a pastor. May the good Lord have mercy on all pastors in these times! If the writer *were* a pastor, he would have to try to stop any abuse. It is a sad situation when some priests in the parish observe the liturgy strictly, while other priests do as they please. Daily communicants notice this and wonder. I know of one case where a courageous parishioner said to a priest after Mass, "We do not recite that part of the Mass with the priest". The priest had only recently arrived in the parish and had told the people at Mass to recite with him, "Through Him, with Him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor is yours, Almighty Father, for ever and ever. Amen". In another case a priest told the parishioners to recite with him the entire Canon of the Mass, including the words of Consecration.

Experienced parish priests can sympathise with pastors who have liturgical abuses in their parishes. The situation may not easily be corrected. For example, there is a shortage of priests. Anyway, the purpose of this article is to let suffering Catholics know that they have plenty of company in the Church, both among the laity and the clergy. Perhaps this knowledge will help them to survive till better days.

SUNDAY AT "THE ENGLISH MARTYRS"

Craving for silence, Father gets
A perfect storm of missalettes;
While shy Miss Thurible, dear soul,
Feels like a goldfish in a bowl;
And Wing-Commander Swoopup-Fluttery
Indulges in some loud tut-tuttery.
Suffering torments past belief
Young Mr. Browning sets his teeth;
While our musician, Mr. Strong
Moans quietly: "O Lord, how long?"

What of the McNamara Clan?
There's Dad, who takes it like a man,
And Mum., who's "with" the Liturgy,
But clutches still her rosary;
And Mike, who's in a partial stupor
Thinks the guitars and drums are super;
And Gran, who being tired and old,
Just keeps on doing what she's told.
The youngest of this family,
Is naughty Marion, aged three,
Who loves a lot of fuss and noise,
And is allowed to bring her toys,
Oblivious of Miss McSnooty,
Who has to sit and look at Sooty.

All crave for PEACE, which no-one gets,
Only a storm of missalettes.

—R. S.

We are publishing in three parts the extremely important Joint Pastoral Letter of the late Archbishop Oscar Romero of San Salvador and Bishop Arturo Damas of Santiago de Maria, appointed Apostolic Administrator of San Salvador Archdiocese after the Archbishop's murder on March 24th of this year, 1980. The Joint Pastoral was published on August 6th, 1978.

The section of this first part immediately below is *not* part of the Joint Pastoral, but is presented here to acquaint readers with the background against which the Joint Pastoral was written. For permission to reproduce this section and, indeed, the whole Joint Pastoral, we are indebted to the Catholic Institute for International Relations, who produced this first section on El Salvador. Readers may like to know that copies of the Joint Pastoral can be obtained for 25p plus postage from the C.I.I.R., 1, Cambridge Terrace, London NW1 4JL, United Kingdom.

The Church, Political Organization and Violence

1 : BACKGROUND : EL SALVADOR

THE tiny republic of El Salvador is the smallest country on the mainland of the Americas with an area of approximately 8,200 square miles. Its population numbers 4,250 000 giving El Salvador one of the highest population densities in the Third World.

Although El Salvador is the most industrialised country in Central America, its economy is primarily agricultural with coffee, sugar and cotton forming its major exports. 60% of the people of El Salvador live in the rural areas and depend on agriculture for their livelihood, either as

subsistence farmers or as labourers on the large plantations. El Salvador's land tenure system is grossly inequitable with less than 2% of the population owing almost 60% of the land, whilst 91% owns less than 22%. As a result, there are large numbers of landless peasants or peasants with smallholdings which are inadequate to support a family.

The unequal distribution of land and the emphasis on growing crops for export, rather than for domestic consumption, has resulted in extreme poverty for the majority of the people. Hunger and malnutrition are endemic. It has, for example, been estimated that 73% of the children under five years old suffer from malnutrition.

Since the early 1930s, until the coup of October 1979 which installed a broadly-based civilian/military government, El Salvador had been ruled by a succession of military regimes. During the 1960s there were moves towards greater democracy and a number of political parties were formed. These opposition parties were successful in competing in the Presidential elections in both 1972 and 1977 but on both occasions the military regime resorted to massive electoral fraud to deny them victory. During the 1970s the activities of the opposition political parties were severely circumscribed with many leaders and members harassed, forced into exile or detained for varying periods without trial. Industrial trades unions were legal but their activities were heavily restricted. The most acute repression of political activity was, however, directed at the peasant organisations. In 1932 the government crushed a peasant uprising leaving upwards of 10,000 people dead. This rebellion is vividly remembered and hitherto Salvadorean law has not recognised the right of the rural population to associate in trades unions or agrarian leagues (although this has now been promised by the new government). Despite this the peasants continued to organise themselves to campaign for greater access to the land and for basic wages and working conditions.

In 1975, in an attempt to relieve the tension in the country-side, efforts were made to implement a very mild land reform programme. This move was vigorously opposed by the traditional land-owners as a result of which the pro-

posal was abandoned in 1976 before it could be carried out. General Romero, who was associated with the thwarting of the land-reform programme, was made President in the fraudulent elections of 1977. Following that election repression in El Salvador increased dramatically. Human rights were systematically violated. Large numbers of people were detained for periods without trial, torture appeared routine for political prisoners, some several hundred people 'disappeared' without trace following seizure by the security forces. Dozens of people were killed in military operations in rural areas or in attacks on demonstrations. When the new government assumed power, it was unable to find any of these 'disappeared' people in custody. These violations of human rights have been graphically documented in reports of the International American Commission for Human Rights and a British Parliamentary Delegation to El Salvador in 1978.

In the face of this repression, the Catholic Church in what is a predominately a Roman Catholic country played an increasingly prominent role in defence of human rights. The Church has been particularly active in promoting the just demands of the peasantry and was associated with the land reform programme. As a result the Church was identified as 'subversive' by the hysterically anti-communist regime of General Romero. Priests and lay people in the Church's social work were harassed, deported, tortured and even killed. Between March 1977 and October 1979 six Salvadorean Catholic priests were assassinated. The most outspoken Church leader in El Salvador is Oscar Romero, Archbishop of the capital city, San Salvador. Following his appointment as Archbishop in February 1977, he consistently denounced the gross violations of human rights in El Salvador and advocated social and economic reforms to remove the injustices of El Salvador's poverty-ridden feudal society. In October 1978, 119 British parliamentarians of all parties nominated Archbishop Romero for the 1979 Nobel Peace Prize. This nomination was subsequently endorsed by 26 members of the United States Congress and members of European legislature. Events in El Salvador were further highlighted for people in Britain by the kidnapping and subsequent release of two British

bankers by a guerilla group. Archbishop Romero condemned this action and tried to intercede with the kidnappers on several occasions on the bankers' behalf.

The pastoral letter published here was written by Archbishop Romero and Bishop Rivera Damas of Santiago de Maria. Since it was issued in August 1978, the situation in El Salvador has changed dramatically. General Romero's dictatorship was overthrown and a coalition government representing a wide spectrum of political views established. The tasks facing the new government in transforming the economic and social structures of El Salvador were enormous. In addition, immediately after the coup the people's faith in the government was shaken by the violent clashes and repression by the security forces which resulted in much loss of life. It was clear that the security forces were not under the full control of the new government. The resultant tensions led to the resignations of all the democratic politicians in the administration in January 1980. Throughout this period Archbishop Romero has continued to be a staunch defender of the rights of the poor.

Although this pastoral letter was written in circumstances very different from those pertaining at present, we believe that it contains an enduringly valid message and is an important document for all those seeking to understand events in Latin American and the Church's response in situations of conflict and injustice.

INTRODUCTION OF THE PASTORAL LETTER

We, the Archbishop of San Salvador and the Bishop of Santiago de Maria, had already been thinking of sending this pastoral letter to our dioceses to mark our return from our *ad limina* visit to Rome and as an act of homage to our Divine Saviour on our pastoral feast of the Transfiguration.

Never did we imagine however that the sudden death of His Holiness Pope Paul VI, now of happy memory, would give both these events a new significance.

Who could have imagined the eloquent coincidence of Paul VI's death and our own titular feast of the Transfiguration. The final messare of his lucid teaching — the short address he had written to be read at the angelus of

6 August — now becomes for us a cherished family heirloom since it was inspired by the divine Patron of El Salvador: "That body which is transfigured before the astonished gaze of his disciples" His Holiness said, "is the Body of Christ our brother but it is also our body summoned to glory. That light which floods over it is, and will be, our share in that inheritance of splendour. We are called to share this glory because we are sharers in the divine nature". From this vision of transcendence which lit up the last day of his mortal life, the Pontiff turned his gaze back to earth in anxious concern for the poor.

Our audience with the Supreme Pastor of the Church, together with his wise pastoral advice, gained, through his death, the solemn character of a last testament. The same pattern of turning towards the absolute and eternal, together with a concern for the ordinary needs of our people, confirmed our episcopal service when, on that unforgettable 21 June, he spoke to us with the tenderness of a father. He was already aware of the approach of death, but he spoke with the firmness and clarity of a prophet who had long known, and known intimately, the historical situation of El Salvador. He exhorted its pastors to guide and sustain the country along the paths of justice and love for the Gospel.

We feel, then, that the light with which our letter seeks to illuminate the way ahead for our dioceses is the true light of the Gospel and of the Church's magisterium. We feel that the Transfiguration of Christ, which, in a great Pope's last hour, illuminated the divine vocation of men and exposed the unjust inequalities of this world, has the strength and brightness to offer us — through an analysis of the events which are threatening to drown us in a sea of bitterness and confusion — an effective answer to the serious questioners who look to us for a way out of our country's current difficult situation.

The Universal Magisterium

The Father offers us the divine Transfigured One as the Son in whom he is well pleased and tells us to listen to Him as Saviour and Teacher of the world.

The Church, which is the extension of the teaching and salvation of Christ, cannot remain silent when faced with problems. The testimony of the Second Vatican Council, always the point of reference for the teaching of Pope Paul VI; its application to Latin America through the documents of Medellin; the recent Popes, many Latin American episcopates and our own tradition in the Church of El Salvador, shows us that the Church has always been present when society clearly seemed in a "situation of sin" (Medellin, *Peace* 1), in need of the light of the Word of God and the word of the Church in history. This prophetic mission of the Church in defence of the poor, who have always had a special place in the hearts of the Lord (*Evangeli Nuntiandi*, 12), numbers among its apostles in Latin America such men as Fray Antonio de Montesinos, Fray Bartolome de las Casas, Bishop Juan del Valle and Bishop Valdivieso who was assassinated in Nicaragua because of his opposition to the landowner and governor, Contreras.

To these eloquent testimonies of the Church, both universal and local, we join today our own humble voice. In obedience to his Holiness' exhortation, we hope that it will serve to guide and encourage the beloved people we serve as pastors.

Our True Intention

We realise that we risk being misunderstood or condemned, through malice or naiveté, as inopportune or ignorant. It is, however, our honest intention to dispel the inertia of many Salvadoreans who are indifferent to the hardship which exists in our land, especially in the countryside. It is true that there is some awareness in society of the plight of the workers or of the small traders suffering from acts of arson, and even of the crowded slums and shanty-towns. Nevertheless we are worried at the indifference shown by many urban groups to rural hardship. It seems to be accepted as inevitable that the majority of our people should be weighed down by hunger and unemployment. Their sufferings, injuries and deaths seem to have become routine and to have lost the power to make us ask "Why is this happening? What should we do to avoid it?" How can we answer the eternal question which the

Lord put to Cain, "what have you done with your brother?" (*Genesis 4:9*).

The Duty and Dangers of Speaking Out

It is also our intention to clarify yet again the attitude of the Church to human situations which, by their very nature, involve economic, social and political problems. 'The Church is meddling in politics' we keep hearing, as if that were irrefutable proof that it had abandoned its mission. And the Church is also misrepresented and slandered in order to discredit and silence it because the interests of a few are not compatible with the logical consequences which follow from the Church's religious and evangelical mission in the human, economic, social and political spheres.

We are well aware that what we have to say, as with every attempt to sow the seed of the Gospel, will run the risk of the seed in the parable of the sower: there will be those, even those of good will, who will not understand because the misery of the poor and, above all, of the peasants, is remote from them and tragically forms a part of the history of their country to which they have become accustomed. There will also be those who will "hear but never understand and see but never perceive" (*Matthew 13:14*). There will be those, too, who prefer the darkness to the light because their actions are evil (*John 3:19*). However, thank God, we are sure we can also count on some honest and brave souls who will be ready to draw near to the light, who will not conform to this world (*Romans 12:2*) and who will co-operate in 'the birth pains' of a new creation (*Romans 8:22*).

Two Themes: 'Popular Organisations' and Violence

The situation in our country and the constant questions of our Christians, especially rural workers, require us as a matter of urgency to clarify as far as possible these two problems. The problem of 'popular organisations', which should perhaps be given a name which more accurately reflects their nature and aims, and the problem of violence, which is daily in greater need of the distinctions and classifications of prudent Christian moral teaching.

We will, therefore, divide our pastoral letter into three parts:

1. The situation of 'popular organisations' in El Salvador.
2. The relationship between the Church and 'popular organisations'.
3. The Church's view of violence.

Our Limitations Imply a Dialogue

Because these problems have assumed a new form, it is natural that many people, particularly peasants, ask: "What are we to make of these 'popular organisations' which are independent of the government, especially when, alongside and bitterly antagonistic towards them, government organisations are growing up? Does being a Christian mean one has to join some 'popular organisation' seeking radical changes in our country? How can one be a Christian and accept the demands of the Gospel and yet join some organisation which neither believes in nor has sympathy with the Gospel? How ought a Christian to resolve the conflict between loyalty to the Gospel and the demands of an organisation when these may not be in accordance with the Gospel? What is the relationship between the Church and these organisations?" On the question of violence, people are asking where, in the situation of our country, the line should be drawn between what is and is not permissible in the light of the law of Christ. As pastors, we have a duty to give a Christian answer, an answer of the Church, to these problems which trouble so many consciences. We are, however, also aware of our limitations. The Council itself recognized them when it warned the laity not to think that their pastors will always be in the position of being able to give immediate and definite answers to all the questions which arise, no matter how complicated. Although the problems we shall address are old ones, they have often taken quite new forms in the recent history of our country. Therefore, because of the novelty of the subject and the natural limitations of its authors, our pastoral letter quite deliberately offers no more than the Christian principles on which a solution must be based. It is a call to the whole people

of God to reflect on these matters in their local churches, with their pastors and with the universal Church, in the light of the Gospel and faithful to the true identity of the Church.

This is not an attempt to evade the seriousness of the problem. We are following the Spirit of the Church's magisterium which Paul VI in his letter *Octagesimo Adveniens*, defined as follows: "It is the duty of Christian communities to analyse objectively the situation in each one's own country, illuminating it by means of the light of the unchangeable word of the Gospel, and to draw principles of reflection, norms of judgement and guidelines for action from the social teaching of the Church . . . and, with the help of the Holy Spirit, in communion with the bishops responsible, and in dialogue with other Christian brethren and all men of good will, to decide the choices and commitments that are called for in order to bring about the social, political and economic transformation which seems necessary, with whatever degree of urgency is necessary in each case . . ."

'POPULAR ORGANISATIONS' IN EL SALVADOR *

Within the context of our national situation, the proliferation of 'popular organisations' is one of those phenomena of which the Council makes mention when, calling upon Christians to reflect and discern, it says "The people of God, motivated by this faith, labour to decipher authentic signs of God's presence and purpose in the happenings, needs and desires in which this People has a part along with other men of our age. For faith throws a new light on everything, and manifests God's design for a man's total vocation" (*Gaudium et spes*, 11).

In this pastoral letter we have no intention of studying the origins, history and objectives of these organisations. We want simply, in this first part, to restate the right to organise and to denounce the violation of that right in our

* Since this Pastoral Letter was written in 1978 the social and political situation in El Salvador has changed very considerably (see Introduction) and this must be borne in mind by the reader.

country. In the second part we shall deal with the relations between the Church and the 'popular organisations'.

1. *The Right to Organise*

The United Nations' Declaration of Human Rights, to which this country is a signatory, and article 160 of our Constitution, proclaim the right of all citizens to assemble to form associations.

This right, whose proclamation is one of the achievements of our civilisation has been repeatedly affirmed by the Church: "From the natural sociability of man arises the right of coming together and forming associations", said Pope John XXIII in the encyclical *Pacem in Terris*. The Second Vatican Council reminded us once again that "Among the basic rights of the human person must be counted the right of freely founding labour unions. These unions should be truly able to represent the workers" (*Gaudium et spes*, 68). For our own continent, Medellin recalled that "peasants and workers' unions, to which all workers have a right, ought to acquire a satisfactory degree of strength and influence in the intermediate professional structure." (Medellin, *Justice*, 12).

2. *The Violation of this Right in El Salvador*

Unfortunately there is an enormous difference between legal declarations and the reality in our country. Various political, trade union, workers, peasants, cultural and other associations do exist here. Some of these enjoy legal recognition, others do not. Some of them — with or without legal recognition — are able to function freely, others are not. However, we do not now want to concentrate on the legal aspect of formal recognition. We are more interested in looking at the freedom in practice of any human group to exercise its natural right of association and the support and co-ordination it can expect from an authority genuinely concerned with the common good "to enable it to achieve its own fulfilment in a relatively thorough and ready way" (*Gaudium et spes*, 74).. It is here, faced with the absence of this real freedom, that we have to denounce the violation of this human right of association proclaimed by our Constitution and by an international agreement accepted by our country.

We note, specifically, under this heading, the following three abuses :

a) *There is discrimination between citizens*

The first conclusion of any impartial analysis of the right of association must be that groups in agreement with the government or protected by it have complete freedom. Organisations, on the other hand, which voice dissent from the government—political parties, trade unions or peasant organisations—find themselves hindered or even prevented from exercising their right to organise legally and work for their aims, just though these may be.

b) *There is harm done to the majority*

This discrimination results in yet another violation of our democratic rights—for let us not forget that the meaning of the Greek word 'demos' is the totality of the citizens. It is a fact, and one for which there is daily fresh evidence, that the economically powerful minorities can organise in defence of their interests and very often to the detriment of the great majority of the people.

They can mount publicity campaigns, even in opposition to the government; they can influence important items of legislation, as in the case of agrarian reform and the Law for the Defence and Maintenance of Public Order. By contrast, other groups among the mass of the people meet only difficulties and repression when they try, in an organised way, to defend the interests of the majority.

This situation inflicts at least two serious injuries on our people; it infringes their dignity, their freedom and their equal right to participate in politics, and it leaves without protection those who need it most. "The aspiration to equality and the aspiration to participate are two forms of man's dignity and liberty" said Pope Paul VI in *Octagesimo Adveniens*. There is indeed, in this state of affairs, a blatant inequality between citizens as regards participation in politics depending on whether they belong to the powerful minority or to the poor majority, and whether or not they enjoy official approval.

With regard to the lack of protection for those who need it most, let us recall that, historically, true laws were made

to protect the weakest, those who, without the law, are prey to the powerful. The protection of the weakest was also the historical origin of the different groupings among the majority, the modern unions of workers and peasants. What forced them to unite in the first place was not just their civil right to participate in the political and economic management of their country, but the simple basic need to survive, to exercise their right to make their conditions of life at least tolerable. It is here, in this basic need, that the need for legislation and the need for organisation coincide. The absurd response to this basic need is — without any attempt to distinguish between true and false — indiscriminate repression. 'Clandestine forces of subversion' is the term used to describe the struggle of those who are trying to improve society so that its benefits and ideals do not exclude those who also contribute to producing the wealth of the country.

c) *Conflict is being provoked among the peasants*

Though we do not want to go into great detail, we cannot at this point ignore the tragedy in this country of organisations, composed mainly of peasants, at odds with one another and which have recently even engaged in violent conflict.

The most serious aspect is that it is not — solely or ultimately — ideologies that have divided them and brought them into conflict. The members of these organisations do not, for the most part, think differently about peace, work or the family. The most serious aspect is that the people of our countryside are being divided by the very thing that most deeply unites them: the same poverty, the same need to survive, to give something to their children, to provide bread, education and health care for their families.

What is happening is that, in order to escape from their common poverty, some are corrupted by the benefits offered by pro-government organisations. In return they are employed in various repressive activities which regularly include informing, threatening, kidnapping, torturing and even, in some cases, killing their fellow peasants. Others, active in organisations independent of the government or opposed to it, strive to find more satisfactory ways of

escaping their precarious situation. Finally special attention should be paid to those groups of Christian communities which have so often been the target of mis-representation and manipulation. These groups meet to reflect on the word of God, which, if it is a word incarnate in real situations, always awakens the Christian conscience to its duty to work for a more just society through the various political choices suggested by that faith and conscience.

3. *Why the Right to Organise and 'Why Do We Think Especially of the Peasants ?*

It is very sad to have to present to the Divine Patron of our Nation on his titular feast, a peasantry which, paradoxically, is organised to divide and destroy itself. So, thinking for the moment chiefly of the peasants, and recalling the fundamental right of all men to organise, we invite you to lift your minds and hearts to our Divine Saviour. He is the ultimate basis of all the rights and all the duties which regulate relations between men.

He is not a God of death nor of fratricidal confrontation. He did not give us a social nature so that we could destroy ourselves in mutually hostile organisations, but so that we could complement our individual limitations with the strength of all, united in love. Under the law of His justice and His commandment of love, the rights of man ought to be exercised in such a way that they do not become the cause of fratricidal strife. The right to organise is not absolute : it does not make unjust ends or methods legitimate. It is a right to join forces in order to achieve, by honest means, ends which are also honest and conducive to the common good.

The right to organise is one which must be exercised on the basis of the dignity of the individual. The criterion for organising, whether at the political, cultural or trade union level, is the defence of legitimate interests, whether or not they are contained in a specific piece of legislation or an interpretation of it.

Again, in regard to the right to organise, we uphold the Constitution when it recalls the limits imposed by morality and rejects anarchical theories of the use of rights. Our intention, in demanding that the right of association be

enjoyed by all Salvadoreans, with particular emphasis on the peasantry, is certainly not to defend terrorist groups or support anarchist movements and irrationally subversive ideologies. We have in the past often denounced any cult of violence or class hatred, and we have reiterated the principle of our Christian moral teaching that the end does not justify criminal means and that there is no freedom to do evil. We therefore defend the right to make just demands and denounce the dangerous and evil-minded oversimplification which seeks to misrepresent them and condemn them as terrorism or unlawful subversion.

No-one can take away, least of all from the poor, the right to organise, because the protection of the weak is the principal purpose of laws and of social organisations.

That is why we have said that we want, in this letter, to stress the right of peasants to form organisations. They are the ones who, today, have most difficulty in exercising this right.

Historically, peasants are the class with which society has least concerned itself. Pope John XXIII, who was never ashamed of his peasant origin, advocated the changes necessary so that peasants "should not suffer from an inferiority complex" (*Mater et Magistra*, 125), and he warned that "it was very suitable that they should come together in associations . . . because, as it has been rightly said, in our age isolated voices are like voices blowing in the wind". (*ibid.*, 146). The Second Vatican Council reminded us that peasants do not simply want better living conditions but also want "to take part in regulating economic, social, political and cultural life" (*Gaudium et spes*, 9). During his journey to Colombia, Pope Paul VI solemnly affirmed to the peasants of Mosquera, "You are aware of your needs and your sufferings, and, like many others in the world, you are not going to accept that these conditions continue for ever without being able to bring about the needed remedy". He reminded them that they belong, without discrimination, to the brotherhood of man. (Address to the peasants, August 1968).

Medellin re-emphasised this right (*Justice*, 11-12) said it has been reiterated since then by several Latin American hierarchies (Colombia, July 1969; Honduras, 8 January

1970; Peru, 4 December 1975; etc.). Our own Episcopal Conference has also spoken out clearly in defence of the peasants' right of association. In line with the position taken up by our own hierarchy, we have no hesitation in reaffirming the right of men and women living in the countryside to form associations, and, indeed, encouraging the formation of such associations. In so doing we do not speak, as pastors, with a particular political view but with the Christian view that the poor should have sufficient strength not to be the victims of the interests of a minority, as they have in the past.

Medellin made it quite clear that, in the particular situation of Latin America, it is an "eminently Christian task", and, therefore, part of the "pastoral policy of the Latin American hierarchy to encourage and to favour all efforts by the people to create and develop their own basic organisations to claim and establish their rights and to search for the true justice" (Medellin, *Peace*, 20, 27).

(To be continued)

FATHER JOSEPH BROWN

whose poems have been so much appreciated by readers of *Christian Order* has published at £1.50 what he calls a final volume of his poetry. Titled, *At the End of the Day*, it is obtainable from the Author at Abbey Mead, Hall Lane, Lydiate, Liverpool, U.K.

Book Review

PUEBLA AND AFTER

Puebla : Official Conclusions of the Third General Conference of Latin American Bishops, St. Paul Publications and Catholic Institute for International Relations, 1 Cambridge Terrace, London NW1 4JL; pp. 220. £4.25.

It is important to realise that the Conference of Latin American Bishops, which took place at Puebla in January, 1979 and over whose opening stages the Holy Father presided, was not an isolated event; a panic throw-up to meet the needs of the Church in increasingly confused times. To view Puebla in these terms would be to misunderstand its significance completely and, in consequence, to misinterpret it. It might be described as the first—but by no means final—flowering of a growth of great promise, whose seeds had been planted long before.

Interestingly enough, the man who did the planting was none other than that great Pope, Pius XII. This is likely to disconcert both Traditionalists, who like to think of him, for the most part, as holding fast to the old at *all* points and Progressives, who refuse to allow him any initiative in the rightfully new. They are both wrong. His initiatives were far more numerous and far-seeing than either Traditionalists or Progressives think. One of them concerned South America where, it is worthwhile remembering, the majority of the Church's members happen to live.

The date was 1955 and the occasion was the first General Conference of the Latin American Bishops, which took place at Rio de Janeiro in Brazil on the occasion of the Eucharistic Congress which was held in that city in that year. Cardinal Piazza, Papal Legate to the Eucharistic Congress, brought to the Bishops in Conference an Apostolic Letter, *Ad Ecclesiam Suam*, from Pius XII and in which the Holy Father expressed his great concern at the inability of the Latin American Church, through lack of manpower, to meet the Continent's rapidly growing claims for evangelization. It appeared that a whole people might be slipping away from the Faith. "If circumstances require

it", wrote the Pope, "recourse must be had to new forms of the apostolate and new methods which will better answer the needs of our time and will make use of the means supplied by modern progress".

"New forms of the apostolate", "new methods", "the means supplied by modern progress"—these and much more besides were all advocated at the Puebla Conference in 1979 and at Medellin, where the Latin American Bishops had met for their second Conference a little more than ten years before. Had Pius XII sanctioned these rather than Paul VI, in the case of Medellin, and John Paul II, in the case of Puebla, many Traditionalists in the Church today, who are inclined to look askance at both, would have accepted the findings of each without demur. The point, I think, is worth making. What appears to matter for them, I think it fair to say, is the name of the Pope responsible for each of the Conferences rather than the actual, objective content of their conclusions. They are doubtful of Medellin, which was held in 1968, thirteen years after Rio, because they are doubtful of Paul VI; and they are uncertain about Puebla because they are uncertain as yet about John Paul II. I would suggest, with all possible courtesy, that they may not have read either of these two path-breaking documents. This is a pity. There is still time for them to do so. If they do read them, they will find great richness in both; an extension into the present of perennial truth, which gives great cause for hope.

The truth at Puebla as at Medellin ten years before is the truth of Christ, of the Christian caught up in Christ, through membership of His Church which Baptism brings, and of the evangelizing consequences which flow from this double truth, particularly for the poor and the oppressed. The approach is Pauline and immensely dynamic. It is of great richness and beauty. The Church, so old, is shown as yet so new in all the brightness of a spring morning. And the call she makes to the Christian through Baptism is to life shared in love with Christ, not apart from the Church, but within it, for the two are inseparable. The Christian finds himself, comes alive, in Christ, and finds, in life shared in love with Christ, the spur that takes him, for Christ's sake, to others, particularly the poor and the

oppressed to whom Christ went especially whilst on earth and in whom, now and always, He makes a special call on our love. For them we must labour especially so that Christ may come alive in them; which means, amongst other things, striving with everything we have for living and working conditions suited to their human and Christian dignity as part and parcel of the process whereby they may be helped, out of the love we bear them as our Brothers and Sisters in Christ, to bring Him to life in themselves. Thus the social apostolate, as it used to be called, is in no way an optional extra for the Christian to take up if he feels so inclined. In its many forms, it is implicit in the gospel message, integral to the whole process of evangelization—bringing Christ, that is, to others—which is part and parcel of the Christian reality. Here and now within the context of the New Life which Christians share in love with Christ as Brother—life as part of the whole process of salvation which finds its culmination in that final union with Christ which we call the Beatific Vision—evangelization itself takes on a deeper and far richer meaning. It is in no way meant for the favoured few, but endemic in the life of the Christian. For him there can be no dualism. His life cannot be compartmented; which means that the love of Christ cannot stay encased within him. Of its very nature—if it be genuine—it must flow out on others. Social action, at base, is nothing more nor less than the flowing over onto others, in one way or another, of the love of Christ.

It is the restoration of this whole supreme concept, Pauline and utterly dynamic, which strikes me as the essential contribution of Puebla (as of Medellin which preceded it in 1968) to the Church today. Even so, I stress—as I always will stress—that there is nothing new here; only the recovery of something very old and very rich. “My little children”, said St. Paul, for whom I am in labour until Christ be formed in you”; and again, “*Caritas Christi urget nos*”, the love of Christ spurs us on. What Puebla has given us is not a new dimension, but, rather, the recovery of an old richness; height and depth and breadth — the total ramification—of that life shared in love with Christ, which Baptism brings to the Christian, and which is, at the same

time, the very kernal of that evangelizing effort—the carrying of that love in himself to others for Christ's sake — which is the sign of his rebirth.

For the Christian, in other words, Christ is sufficient, for Christ is all. He need look no further for the drive that will take him out of himself to set the world on fire. The tragedy at the moment is that so many do. The reason is that they have never known Christ, for they have never been shown Him. They have been set within a system and left there. That is why, understandably enough, they have sought their inspiration elsewhere. I do not blame them for doing so. The fact remains that there is no need and no call for the Christian to imprison himself within an ideology to achieve that for which Christ has given him scope in superabundance. Christ cannot be contained within ideologies; to attempt so to do is, precisely, to constrict the scope He offers, to cripple the effort that could be made, to shed its glory. There is no need to make Christ out as a political revolutionary, which he was not, or the Gospels as a political document, which they were not, with a view to transforming on this earth, as transformed it should be, the lot of the oppressed and the poor. Christ and his love taken to the ultimate, *as taken He should be*, is all that is required; and that is everything. The meaning of what Pope Paul VI (in his Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelization in the Modern World*, 1975) and Pope John Paul II (in his opening address to the Puebla Conference and his encyclical, *Redemptor Hominis*) calls *integral* liberation is there. Christ has not failed His Church. Too often the members of His Church have failed Christ; they have lost sight of Him, so that their evangelizing effort has shrivelled — to the point where, at times, the Church has become scarcely credible in the eyes, even, of many of its members. So many of the best have gone, looked elsewhere for inspiration. I understand.

Puebla is a call—or should I say recall—to the reality and the richness of life in Christ and all it means for the Christian and the world. Incumbent on each now is the task of making that reality part of himself; praying his way into the richness of Christ. This is what renewal means. This lies at its heart.

—Paul Crane, S.J.

The Imitation of Christ

by Thomas á Kempis

read by Fr. Hugh Thwaites, S.J.

After the Bible, the 'Imitation of Christ' is perhaps the most widely read book in the world. Since it was written, early in the fifteenth century, thousands of editions and translations have appeared. It describes the way of a follower of Christ as he learns to mould his life in conformity with the pattern set by Christ. It is an intensely practical work which faces the difficulties and temptations of daily life, but also describes the joys and helps which are found on the way. The book was originally issued anonymously in 1418. The well-known words 'Inquire not who said this, but attend to what is said' shows that the author wished to remain anonymous. But, as the work began to be ascribed to various great writers (e.g. St. Bernard, St. Bonaventure, Pope Innocent III) the real author, Thomas á Kempis, signed his name into a codex, still existing, containing the four books and other minor treatises. The original is in the Royal Library, Brussels. The book has proved astonishingly relevant to people of different ages and of differing views. It has been said that the late Pope, John Paul I was reading it at the time of his death.

In the spoken form, the thoughts and subtleties expressed by the author gain added brilliance by repetitive listening.

Fr. Thwaites, who many of our subscribers will have heard in the *Talking Catechism* series, *The Rosary*, and *The Way of the Cross*, has taken this wonderful book to bring it to us through the medium of compact cassettes, and listeners will find that the full meaning of the gifted pen of Thomas á Kempis becomes more apparent.

Obtainable by post from :

CV PRODUCTIONS

**48 CAMBRIDGE ROAD, GILLINGHAM,
KENT ME8 0JE**

Price £2.25 each cassette, postage 15p

Complete set of six cassettes £13.50 postage 50p. These prices in £ sterling apply to U.K. and Eire. For postage overseas please allow 45p or \$1 per cassette.

VATICAN VOICES AND NOTABLE PAPAL QUOTES

Edited by Cletus Healy, S.J.

Weekly newsletter. The best of the Vatican's own *L'Osservatore Romano*. Two sections (exclusively of excerpts):

The "Voices" — the gist of the more significant articles.

The "Quotes" — the more noteworthy quotes gleaned from all the other extensive comments of Our Holy Father.

(Also available: Study Guides — to go with each issue during 27 of the Religious Ed. weeks of the year — as a basis for Family Discussion or for CCD class use.)

Subscription Rates:	U.S.	Foreign*	
		Surface	Air
Regular subscription	\$ 15	\$ 20	\$ 30
Same — with 27 Study Guides.	\$ 20	\$ 25	\$ 36

(Back issues available — Same rates.)

* Foreign mailings: Monthly only.

ALSO — Ideal for Pulpit Use:

"RESEARCH SERVICE ON PAPAL QUOTATIONS"

The more incisive and pithy comments of our Holy Father, gleaned from all that's printed in *L'Osservatore* — on 4 x 6 cards, with titles and sources. 48 cards a mailing. 10 mailings (480 quotes!) a year!

Subscription (Jan-Dec, '80)	\$ 35	\$ 45	\$ 55
Same plus 240 cards printed 1979	\$ 55	\$ 65	\$ 75
Index File Cards to fit	\$ 7	\$8.50	\$ 10

Please send remittance with request.

Checks payable (U.S. \$) to: The Truth, Inc., 3400 W. Michigan Street
Milwaukee, WI 53208.